

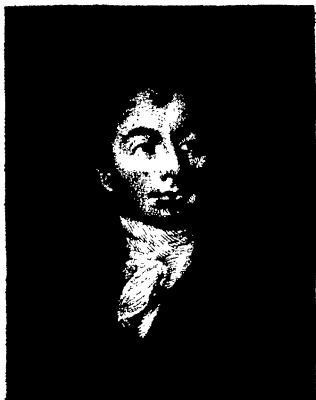
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Golden Treasury Series

POEMS BY ROBERT SOUTHEY

POEMS
BY
ROBERT SOUTHEY

CHOSEN AND ARRANGED BY
EDWARD DOWDEN



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In Memoriam

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INTRODUCTION

THE interest which Southey's poetry retains for the student of nineteenth-century literature is twofold : first, it expresses the genius and character of an eminent individual ; secondly, it is a portion of the romantic revival of his time. The best mode of approach to his writings is perhaps through his biography. When we become intimate with the man, we gain a friend worthy of honour and of love. We turn to his writings, and recognise his personality impressed on everything that he put forth. We find him in these writings with his eagerly acquisitive intellect, his skill as an arranger of all that he acquired, his ambition for large designs, his capacity for intellectual and imaginative excitement, his acquired power of controlling that excitement, his genial temper, his passion of indignation against baseness and wrong-doing, his mirthfulness, his seriousness, his loyalty of friendship, his household virtues, his patriotism, his lofty ideals, his moral

wisdom, his sensitiveness, his fortitude, his Christian faith. Each of these is perhaps not rare ; but the union of all these, each in a high degree, in an individual nature is most rare. And writing, as he always did, with perfect sincerity, Southey has conveyed his entire self into his books.

But while Southey is always present in Southey's writings, he is not pre-eminent as a lyric poet. He draws his material often from afar ; his delight is in narrative ; he finds the fables and the circumstances of his chief poems in Arabian fiction, in Hindoo mythology, in books of American travel, in the heroic story of France and of Spain. He belonged to his time, in which the historical tendency and the romantic tendency were in vigorous operation. Before Byron and before Moore, he annexed the East as a province of romantic poetry. He had visited Portugal in early manhood ; he gathered vast material for a History of Spain ; and both in prose and verse he drew English literature closer to that land of glorious tradition. He eagerly hailed the dawn of the French Revolution, and his first long narrative poem is a revival of mediævalism, inspired by revolutionary sentiment, and animated by his own ideals of the heroic in human character. *Joan of Arc*, in its first form, is crude as a work of imagination ; it is infected with sentimentality ; but it is highly characteristic of the time. When his mind matured, his

attachment to the land of his birth grew stronger. Like Wordsworth and like Coleridge, he threw all his passionate sympathy into the English struggle for freedom against the tyranny of Bonaparte ; he felt himself a child of his mother, England ; he grew to love and reverence her institutions, political and ecclesiastical ; but he never ceased to possess and to exhibit the spirit of a reformer. And in the modification of his political and religious views, he also represents a movement common to many minds in the opening years of our century.

The literary instinct developed early with Southey. The first masters of his imagination were Tasso and Ariosto, known through translations, and the author of the *Faerie Queene*. "I drank also," he writes, "betimes of Chaucer's well. The taste which had been acquired in that school was confirmed by Percy's *Reliques* and Warton's *History of English Poetry*, and a little later by Homer and the Bible." From poets of the eighteenth century his early verse received some influences ; his early inscriptions were modelled upon those of Akenside ; his early sonnets upon those of Bowles ; his personified abstractions were in the manner of Akenside, Mason, and Warton ; his rhymeless stanzas were authorised by Collins's *Ode to Evening* ; and later he adapted the system of Sayers's rhymeless choruses to the purposes of narrative. In blank verse he was to some extent influenced by a

great contemporary, afterwards his close friend, Walter Savage Landor, whose *Gebir* had delighted Southey before the author's name was known to him. But Southey's facile verse in general has little in common with the strict outline, the severe symmetry, the poise, the marmoreal majesty of Landor's best writing.

No selections from *Joan of Arc* are given in the present volume. *Joan* was a daring, and to some extent a successful, effort for a youthful poet. Southey in later years rehandled his *Joan*; but he could not make it a good poem, and he obliterated much that is interesting as the expression of the somewhat hectic ardours and overwrought sensibility of his early revolutionary temper. When a Westminster schoolboy Southey had spent many truant hours in the house of a schoolfellow, poring on the folios of Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*. The book seized upon his imagination, and before leaving school he had formed the design of exhibiting all the more prominent and poetical forms of mythology which have prevailed among mankind, by making each the groundwork of a heroic poem. The first subject of his choice in connection with this design was that of the alleged discovery of America by the Welsh prince Madoc. The poem *Madoc* was begun at Bath in the autumn of 1794; having for a time been dropped, it was resumed during a happy year spent at Westbury,

near Bristol ; and it was completed in its earliest and unpublished form on 12th July 1799. The creative impulse, however, was not exhausted, and when Southey came down to breakfast on 13th July, he had in his hand the manuscript of the first hundred lines of *Thalaba*. The plan of *Thalaba* had gradually evolved itself in his mind during four preceding years ; its execution was swift, but not hasty. The later half of the poem was written during Southey's second visit to Portugal, and it was published while he was still abroad.

Coleridge has spoken of "the pastoral charm and wild streaming lights of the *Thalaba*"; it was a favourite with Shelley, and affected his imagination and influenced his metrical forms when he wrote *Queen Mab*. Much in *Thalaba*, which presents the life of the Arabian desert, and assembles the marvels of Mohammedan mythology and legend, is derived from remote sources ; but its moral and spiritual motives are characteristic of the writer. As Joan of Arc, the "delegated maid," was divinely commissioned to restore to its independence the monarchy of France, and to purify her country by expelling the invader, so the young Arabian champion is singled out by Providence for a heroic enterprise and a signal victory over the powers of evil. Destiny has marked him from mankind, in order that by his arm, guided and supported by heavenly grace, the seminary of

magicians—worshippers of Eblis—in the Domdaniel cavern, under the roots of the sea, may be destroyed. He is prepared for his arduous mission by a boyhood spent in pastoral purity and simplicity. He is tested both in his power of enduring pain and his power of resisting unlawful pleasure. He overmasters the temptations of the senses, and opposes himself even to the subtler seductions of enervating grief. With the forces of magic at his command, he comes to feel that there is but one true talisman—the talisman of faith in God; and in the might of that faith he accomplishes his destined task. The last victory of Thalaba over self is when he puts aside the purpose of revenging his father's murder. The pure chivalry of a woman, who gives her life for his, and dies to ward the dagger from his breast, calls forth all that is highest in his spirit; he discovers that to forgive is better than to revenge; purified from all personal and private passion, he becomes the single-hearted champion of God's cause, and at the last receives in Paradise the reward of the good and faithful servant.

Thus in *Thalaba*, behind all the marvels of Arabian fantasy—presented with more of cumulative than penetrative imagination—lie those principles which ruled Southey's heart and life. The poem is not a mere play of fancy dealing with the supernatural; it expresses the writer's homage to moral law; it does honour to the faith of man in the divine order of the

world ; it is designed, after its own fashion, to justify the ways of God. For the purposes of romantic fiction *Thalaba*, as has been said, annexes the East ; but the dominant note of the poem is the note of conscience, the moral ideality of the writer.

When *Madoc* was brought to a close in the summer of 1799, Coleridge advised that it should be immediately published. Southey, who had formed a high estimate of its importance, believed that it could be much improved by a careful revision. *Madoc*, he supposed, would be the greatest poem he should ever produce, and he desired to bestow upon it all possible care. In order to become better acquainted with landscape, manners, and traditions, he visited Wales in the autumn of 1801. Soon after taking up his abode at Keswick he set to work on a reconstruction of the poem, and diligently pursued his task during twelve months of 1803-1804. *Madoc* was now enlarged by one-third, and was divided into the two parts, *Madoc in Wales* and *Madoc in Aztlan*. It was published in 1805 as a massive quarto, making a large claim upon the reader's time and attention, a claim to which the public were not over-willing to respond. But Southey had some consolations : Landor was generous in his esteem ; Scott declared that he had read the poem three or four times with ever increasing admiration ; it kept Fox and his circle at St. Ann's Hill from their beds till midnight ;

Miss Seward, the "swan of Lichfield," sang its praises, and Southey, in her presence, listened with bowed head, controlling the risible muscles, but alive to the humours of the situation.

Those readers who are pleased by animated narrative in verse may find much to enjoy in *Madoc*. That Southey over-valued his poem is certain ; but such a paternal error is natural and is venial. His great interest in travel, and in the manners, customs, and religious observances of strange peoples partly misled his judgment. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that *Madoc* is languidly written ; the tale is in truth a spirited one, and it is spiritedly told. Driven forth by the internecine strife in Wales, Madoc, a prince of the twelfth century, hoists sail with a few chosen companions, and, before Columbus, he becomes the discoverer of the New World. He returns to Wales, relates his adventure, and again seeks his western home, bearing with him his sister Goervyl, and the maiden Senena, following her lover Caradoc, in the disguise of a page. The fortunes of the little band of Britons among the hostile tribe of Aztecas, and their final victory, have something of an epic character, though Southey would not have his poem assume what he calls "the degraded title of epic." The strife described is more than a struggle of races ; it is the struggle—perpetual on earth—of light with darkness, of mercy with cruelty, of truth

with error. Madoc and his associates are the New World champions of Christendom, who plant the cross in the midst of idolatrous and bloody rites. The manners of the poem, says Southey, will be found historically true; the incidents are of his own invention, and are ingeniously diversified. It is unfortunate that the less interesting division of the poem, *Madoc in Wales*, should have to be encountered before we reach the more adventurous *Madoc in Aztlan*.

The religion of the Hindoos had been introduced into English poetry by Sir William Jones. When Southey chose India for the scene of his next poem, he resolved, as he tells us, to construct a story altogether mythological. He recognised the extravagant nature of the fictions with which he had to deal, but he believed that the disadvantage of a monstrous mythology could be counterbalanced by something inward—moral sublimity. He does not in *Kehama* seek for spiritual meanings running through the strange imaginings of India; one or two leading ideas are accepted—a divine Preserver, a divine Destroyer; but for the most part, according to Southey, a false god is a false god, an idol is an idol, and a religion of darkness is maintained by a vicious priestcraft. He hesitated for a time as to the form in which the story should be told. The freedom and variety of the irregular, rhymeless lyric of Dr. Sayers seemed

to suit the changeful narrative and varying moods of *Thalaba*. Southey was much gratified when Henry Kirke White observed that if any other known measure had been adopted, the poem would have been deprived of half its beauty and all its propriety. In *Kehama*, also, the verse is irregular, but it is enriched, and, as it were, steadied by rhyme. "The spirit of the poem," says Southey, "was Indian, but there was nothing Oriental in the style. I had learnt the language of poetry from our own great masters and the great poets of antiquity." What he aimed at was a combination of freedom with richness.

Kehama was begun at Lisbon on the 1st of May 1801; during the reconstruction of *Madoc* it was laid aside; the poem was not finished until November 1809. In the interval Europe had been overrun by the armies of Napoleon; empires had been shattered and kings dethroned. The Rajah Kehama of Southey's poem, the man almighty, took upon him something of the semblance of the Corsican adventurer; some of the writer's vehement political passion entered into his Indian epic; such failure as that of Kehama's ambition, his everlasting infamy, were what Southey most deeply desired for the great enemy of European freedom and justice:

"O fool of drunken hope and frantic vice!
Madman! to seek for power beyond thy scope
Of knowledge, and to deem
Less than Omniscience could suffice

To wield Omnipotence ! O fool, to dream
That immortality could be
The meed of evil ! . . yea, thou hast it now,
Victim of thine own wicked heart's device,
Thou hast thine object now, and now must pay the price."

The poem is in part a protest against that prostrate homage to immoral power which Southey, and with him Coleridge and Wordsworth, looked upon as one of the chief vices of the time.

Kehama, like *Thalaba*, asserts divine Providence ; the evil-doer cannot remain for ever lord of the universe ; the destroying Seeva will ultimately redress the balance of things, however it may have been disturbed for a season. But while the young hero in *Thalaba* co-operates with the good powers of the world through an active championship of right, it is the virtues of fortitude and patience that are before all else celebrated in *Kehama* ; and these also are seen to make for righteousness. If Southey can be described as a disciple in any school of philosophy, he may be said to have been in discipleship to the Stoics. By nature high-strung, sensitive, excitable, he used the teaching of Epictetus as a check upon his temperament. "I carried Epictetus in my pocket," he said, "till my very heart was ingrained with it, as a pig's bones become red by feeding him upon madder. And the longer I live, and the more I learn, the more am I convinced that Stoicism, properly understood, is the best and noblest of

systems." Southey was a cheerful, Christian Stoic ; and his Ladurlad, the victim of Kehama's curse, is a Stoic who worships Brahma. His personal afflictions never for a moment lead him to distrust the divine order of the world. He endures in faith and hope ; and more than once or twice an opportunity occurs for his actively vindicating the cause of righteousness, and helping to make the divine will prevail on earth. This active partnership with the righteous powers, however, belongs less to the suffering Ladurlad than to the radiant Glendoveer. Southey's heroines are, like Milton's, idealised figures that sometimes approach dangerously near to abstractions ; but Kailyal, Ladurlad's daughter, is at least a beautiful incarnation of heroic filial love, and there is a pleasant touch of womanly feeling, which we should not call womanly infirmity, when for a moment she fears that the leprous stain upon her face may alienate the affection of the guardian spirit, Ereenia :

“ Did then the thought of her own Glendoveer
Call forth that natural tear ?
Was it a woman's fear,
A thought of earthly love which troubled her ?
Like yon thin cloud amid the midnight sky
That flits before the wind
And leaves no trace behind,
The womanly pang pass'd over Kailyal's mind.”

But to the divine eyes of Ereenia her soul is visible,
and her marred beauty is no loathsome sight.

The Curse of Kehama was deservedly popular, and the excellent parody in *Rejected Addresses* is an evidence of that popularity. It was followed after an interval of six years by *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*. If Southey were to be remembered by only one poem, those who value his work aright would wish that *Roderick* might be his memorial. In his manipulating of Arabian fiction and Hindoo mythology there is something of a *tour de force*; occasionally he galvanises into motion rather than really animates the lifeless material which he had accumulated. But *Roderick* is vital from first to last. It is, however, a poem which cannot be very successfully represented by extracts, for its effect upon the reader is progressive and cumulative. Southey's theme is indeed a noble one—the purification through penitence and through generous action of an erring but heroic spirit; the passions of patriotism and religion molten into a single ardour; the deliverance of a noble land and a venerable civilisation from the foreigner and the infidel; the uprising of a loyal people against the oppressor. Southey had read of Spain and Portugal until his imagination had wound itself into their past history; but he had also seen with his eyes the landscape of the Spanish Peninsula, and he had entered with all his heart into the contemporary struggle of Spain, aided by English lives, against the French invaders. Many things conspired to make *Roderick* his highest

achievement as a poet. He had reached his full maturity, and his powers were not yet touched by decline. He had passed through a long apprenticeship in the poetic art. His blank verse had acquired a strength and dignity which were lacking in the verse of *Joan of Arc*, and which can be found only in the best passages of *Madoc*. He was assured of the sympathy of a great poet, who had chivalrously volunteered in the cause of Spain, and who was a noble rival in poetic treatment of the same historical subject—Walter Savage Landor.

As in his other poems, so in *Roderick* there is a great contention between the powers of good and evil. The wrong done in an hour of passion by the Gothic king to Count Julian's daughter creates an opportunity for the Moorish invasion. Roderick can never be, like Thalaba, the stainless champion of God. But his repentance is deep; through sorrow and self-imposed austerities his soul is purified; and seeing the havoc wrought upon his suffering people, he is delivered from the danger of a spurious, egoistic saintliness; he dismisses all personal ambition; he would have his very name pass into oblivion; henceforth he will be known only as the Gothic Maccabee; rising above self, he becomes, as it were, a pure organ of the divine will. Yet he does not cease to be a true man; there is a momentary struggle when he abandons the crown to his kinsman Pelayo; he almost

betrays himself by his strong emotion in presence of the wronged Florinda ; his reverence and love for his mother, his affection for his foster-father, the old Siverian, are deeper than before ; he is touched to tears by the fidelity of his hound ; he has a warrior's joy when he once more bestrides his noble steed, Orelia. But the constancy of Roderick's resolution endures to the end. After the overwhelming defeat of the Infidel, to which he had so largely contributed, he feels that his work has been accomplished, and he is seen no more ; only humility and lonely communion with God remain for him :

“ Days, months, and years, and generations pass'd,
And centuries held their course, before, far off
Within a hermitage near Viseu's walls
A humble tomb was found, which bore inscribed
In ancient characters King Roderick's name.”

The secondary personages of the poem are drawn with distinctness, and are far from being mere types or abstractions—the chivalric Pelayo, Roderick's successor on the throne ; the gallant youth, Alphonso ; Count Eudon, poor waverer between conscience and self-interest ; Orpas, the renegade Archbishop ; Julian, brave in battle, but betrayed by the spirit of revenge into the miserable position of his country's enemy ; his daughter Florinda, whose faith in Roderick survives even his passionate offence ; Guisla, inheritor of her mother's weakness of heart and vice of

will ; Adosinda, the Judith of the war ; and Gaudiosa, Pelayo's faithful wife. Nor from this enumeration of secondary figures should the dog Therion, or the good horse Orelia, be omitted. Environing all these is the Spanish landscape, faithfully depicted, and with a dignity that avoids over-ornate attempts at painting in words.

Of Southey's shorter poems many were written in early days when his feelings were crude, his opinions unformed, and his art immature. Others were written with the excellent motive of procuring a guinea or two for the uses of his growing household. Some are, however, lyrics of an uncommon kind, expressing no ecstasy of joy, no agony of regret or desire, but rendering into melodious verse feeling at once deep and sober. Some are poems of tender recollection or meditative wisdom. In several Southey's humour breaks forth, and his mirth is always kindly and honest mirth, good for the uses of the hour ; but in mirthful matter he was easily satisfied, and laughter to be immortal should be either terrible, like that of Swift, or exquisite, like that of Cervantes ; its roots should be entwined with either fear and pain, or else with love, of which the finest good sense, inspired by sympathy with the infirmities of humanity, is a part. Southey's laughter is often the laughter of a genial temperament, or the jocularity which is a relief after toil, and such laughter must die with the occasion that gave it birth.

His *Ballads and Metrical Tales* form a considerable group, of which some examples are given in the present selection. It was at Westbury, in 1798, that Southey caught, as he believed, for the first time, in his *Bishop Bruno*, the true tone of the modern ballad. In the highest poetry of this kind, if the supernatural be introduced, the imagination is for the time persuaded to yield credence ; at least incredulity is suspended, and the wonder and terror—sometimes a terror in beauty—of the poem are accepted as in truth representative of the mystery which for ever environs and underlies our mortal life. Thus romance becomes an interpretation of reality. Southey's romantic ballads in general fall far short of this attainment ; but they can tell a tale clearly, swiftly, vigorously, with heightening touches of imagination ; and occasionally in his poetry—as in the description of the witch Maimuna in *Thalaba*, and that of the apparition of the murdered boy in *Lord William*—the romance is of the more excellent, the interpretative kind ; there is in it something of genuine magic. He took a pleasure, which all his readers will not share, in a combination of the gruesome with the ludicrous, and was on terms of cheerful familiarity or over-familiarity with death and the conventional devil. There is indeed, a diablerie which lends itself to high comedy ; but such comedy cannot be enacted by marionettes ; the freakish race of spirits are born, not made.

In his *Inscriptions* Southey excelled. His earlier master, as has been noted, was Akenside ; his later was Chiabrera. The limitation of space in this form served his imagination, for it compelled him to select what was best and most characteristic. He purposed to write a series of inscriptions relating to the Peninsular War, but did not fully carry out his design. Of those which we possess, a few are not inferior to what Landor might have written, and hardly can higher praise be bestowed. They may be read together with Wordsworth's political sonnets and the pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra, and with Coleridge's letters suggested by the national uprising in Spain. Wordsworth deals, through his imagination, more with the principles which govern a people's life ; Southey's historical instinct led him rather to celebrate heroic action and heroic personages.

Of Southey's Laureate poems, written for public occasions, some are highly creditable exercises in official verse-making. One, certainly not composed by command, the *Ode written during the Negotiations with Buonaparte in January 1814*, is perhaps the loftiest chaunt of political invective, inspired by moral indignation, which our literature possesses. It sprang from the writer's heart and conscience ; it is masterly not only in feeling but in craftsmanship. To Southey the French Emperor was still a "barbarian upstart," the "perfidious Corsican"—

“ Bold man and bad,
Remorseless, godless, full of fraud and lies,
And black with murders and with perjuries.”

There were Englishmen in 1814 who were dazzled by Napoleon's military genius, and who fell prone in the worship of mere power. Southey stood erect in the presence of power which he believed to be immoral, defied it and execrated it. That he did not perceive how, in driving the ploughshare of Revolution across Europe of the old régime, Napoleon was terribly accomplishing an inevitable and a beneficent work may have been an error ; but it was an error to which no blame attaches, and in his fierce indictment he states, with ample support of facts, one entire side of the case. The ode is indeed more than a poem ; it is a historical document expressing the passion which filled many of the highest minds in England, and which, at a later date, was the justification of Saint Helena. The *Funeral Song for the Princess Charlotte of Wales* is another occasional poem of public interest which in its kind may take high rank ; it gives expression at once to the calm of death and the fluctuations of life ; the national sorrow for a young life lost is dignified by a historical background of mournful memories ; the octosyllabic verse chimes and tolls like funeral bells.

Of Southey's poetical work as a whole I may repeat what I have said elsewhere, that, judged by the

highest standards, it takes a midmost place. It does not create many new combinations of feeling ; it does render into art a great body of original thought or passion ; it rarely gives flawless utterance to lyrical moments. But it deepens the channel in which our best habitual emotions flow ; it presents high ideals of character and conduct ; it worthily celebrates heroic action ; it is (to repeat former words of my own) "the output of a large and vigorous mind, amply stored with knowledge ; its breath of life is the moral ardour of a nature strong and generous, and therefore it can never cease to be of worth."

EDWARD DOWDEN.



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Miscellaneous Poems

IMITATED FROM THE PERSIAN

LORD ! who art merciful as well as just,
Incline thine ear to me, a child of dust !
Not what I would, O Lord ! I offer thee,
Alas ! but what I can.

Father Almighty, who hast made me man,
And bade me look to Heaven, for Thou art there,
Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer ;
Four things which are not in thy treasury
I lay before thee, Lord, with this petition : . .
My nothingness, my wants,
My sins, and my contrition.

Lowther Castle, 1828.

‘MY DAYS AMONG THE DEAD ARE PAST’

My days among the Dead are past ;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old ;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe ;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead, with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead, anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity ;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

Kewswick, 1818.

THE HOLLY TREE

O READER ! hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly Tree ?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves
Order'd by an intelligence so wise
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen
 Wrinkled and keen ;
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
 Can reach to wound ;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
 And moralise :
And in this wisdom of the Holly Tree
 Can emblems see
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
One which may profit in the after time.

Thus, though abroad perchance I might appear
 Harsh and austere,
To those who on my leisure would intrude
 Reserved and rude,
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And should my youth, as youth is apt I know,
 Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
 Would wear away,
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And as when all the summer trees are seen
 So bright and green,
The Holly leaves a sober hue display
 Less bright than they,
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly Tree ?

So serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng,
So would I seem amid the young and gay
More grave than they,
That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.

Westbury, 1798.

TO MARY

MARY ! ten chequer'd years have past
Since we beheld each other last ;
Yet, Mary, I remember thee,
Nor canst thou have forgotten me.

The bloom was then upon thy face,
Thy form had every youthful grace ;
I too had then the warmth of youth,
And in our hearts was all its truth.

We conversed, were there others by,
With common mirth and random eye ;
But when escaped the sight of men,
How serious was our converse then !

Our talk was then of years to come,
Of hopes which ask'd a humble doom,
Themes which to loving thoughts might move,
Although we never spake of love.

At our last meeting sure thy heart
Was even as loth as mine to part ;
And yet we little thought that then
We parted . . . not to meet again.

Long, Mary ! after that adieu,
My dearest day-dreams were of you ;
In sleep I saw you still, and long
Made you the theme of secret song.

When manhood and its cares came on,
The humble hopes of youth were gone ;
And other hopes and other fears
Effaced the thoughts of happier years.

Meantime through many a varied year
Of thee no tidings did I hear,
And thou hast never heard my name
Save from the vague reports of fame.

But then I trust detraction's lie
Hath kindled anger in thine eye ;
And thou my praise wert proud to see, . . .
My name should still be dear to thee.

Ten years have held their course ; thus late
I learn the tidings of thy fate ;
A Husband and a Father now,
Of thee, a Wife and Mother thou.

And, Mary, as for thee I frame
A prayer which hath no selfish aim,
No happier lot can I wish thee
Than such as Heaven hath granted me.

London, 1802.

THE DEAD FRIEND

NOT to the grave, not to the grave, my Soul,
Descend to contemplate
The form that once was dear !
The Spirit is not there
Which kindled that dead eye,
Which throb'd in that cold heart,
Which in that motionless hand
Hath met thy friendly grasp.
The Spirit is not there !
It is but lifeless perishable flesh
That moulders in the grave ;
Earth, air, and water's ministering particles
Now to the elements
Resolved, their uses done.
Not to the grave, not to the grave, my Soul,
Follow thy friend beloved,
The spirit is not there !

Often together have we talk'd of death ;
How sweet it were to see
All doubtful things made clear ;
How sweet it were with powers
Such as the Cherubim,
To view the depth of Heaven !
O Edmund ! thou hast first
Begun the travel of Eternity !
I look upon the stars,
And think that thou art there,
Unfetter'd as the thought that follows thee.

And we have often said how sweet it were
With unseen ministry of angel power
To watch the friends we loved.
Edmund ! we did not err !
Sure I have felt thy presence ! Thou hast given
A birth to holy thought,
Hast kept me from the world unstain'd and pure.
Edmund ! we did not err !
Our best affections here
They are not like the toys of infancy ;
The Soul outgrows them not ;
We do not cast them off ;
Oh if it could be so,
It were indeed a dreadful thing to die !

Not to the grave, not to the grave, my Soul,
Follow thy friend beloved !
But in the lonely hour,
But in the evening walk,
Think that he companies thy solitude ;
Think that he holds with thee
Mysterious intercourse ;
And though remembrance wake a tear,
There will be joy in grief.

Westbury, 1799.

SONNETS

I.—“BEWARE A SPEEDY FRIEND, THE ARABIAN
SAID ”

BEWARE a speedy friend, the Arabian said,
And wisely was it he advised distrust :
The flower that blossoms earliest fades the first.
Look at yon Oak that lifts its stately head,
And dallies with the autumnal storm, whose rage
Tempests the great sea-waves ; slowly it rose,
Slowly its strength increased through many an age,
And timidly did its light leaves disclose,
As doubtful of the spring, their palest green.
They to the summer cautiously expand,
And by the warmer sun and season bland
Matured, their foliage in the grove is seen,
When the bare forest by the wintry blast
Is swept, still lingering on the boughs the last.
1798.

II.—WINTER

A WRINKLED, crabbed man they picture thee,
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as grey
As the long moss upon the apple-tree ;
Blue-lipt, an ice-drop at thy sharp blue nose,
Close muffled up, and on thy dreary way,
Plodding alone through sleet and drifting snows.
They should have drawn thee by the high-heapt
hearth,

Old Winter ! seated in thy great arm'd chair,
Watching the children at their Christmas mirth ;
Or circled by them as thy lips declare
Some merry jest or tale of murder dire,
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night,
Pausing at times to rouse the mouldering fire,
Or taste the old October brown and bright.

Westbury, 1799.

THE CATARACT OF LODORE

DESCRIBED IN RHYMES FOR THE NURSERY

“ How does the Water
Come down at Lodore ? ”
My little boy ask'd me
Thus, once on a time ;
And moreover he task'd me
To tell him in rhyme.
Anon at the word,
There first came one daughter
And then came another,
To second and third
The request of their brother,
And to hear how the water
Comes down at Lodore,
With its rush and its roar,
As many a time
They had seen it before.
So I told them in rhyme,
For of rhymes I had store :

And 'twas in my vocation
For their recreation
That so I should sing ;
Because I was Laureate
To them and the King.

From its sources which well
In the Tarn on the fell ;
From its fountains
In the mountains,
Its rills and its gills ;
Through moss and through brake,
It runs and it creeps
For awhile, till it sleeps
In its own little Lake.
And thence at departing,
Awakening and starting,
It runs through the reeds
And away it proceeds,
Through meadow and glade,
In sun and in shade,
And through the wood-shelter,
Among crags in its flurry,
Helter-skelter,
Hurry-scurry.
Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling ;
Now smoaking and frothing
Its tumult and wrath in,
Till in this rapid race
On which it is bent,
It reaches the place
Of its steep descent.

The Cataract strong
Then plunges along,
Striking and raging
As if a war waging
Its caverns and rocks among :
Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping,
Swelling and sweeping,
Showering and springing,
Flying and flinging,
Writhing and ringing,
Eddying and whisking,
Spouting and frisking,
Turning and twisting,
Around and around
With endless rebound !
Smiting and fighting,
A sight to delight in ;
Confounding, astounding,
Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound.

Collecting, projecting,
Receding and speeding,
And shocking and rocking,
And darting and parting,
And threading and spreading,
And whizzing and hissing,
And dripping and skipping,
And hitting and splitting,
And shining and twining,
And rattling and battling,
And shaking and quaking,
And pouring and roaring,

And waving and raving,
And tossing and crossing,
And flowing and going,
And running and stunning,
And foaming and roaming,
And dinning and spinning,
And dropping and hopping,
And working and jerking,
And guggling and struggling,
And heaving and cleaving,
And moaning and groaning ;

And glittering and frittering,
And gathering and feathering,
And whitening and brightening,
And quivering and shivering,
And hurrying and skurrying,
And thundering and floundering ;
Dividing and gliding and sliding,
And falling and brawling and sprawling,
And driving and riving and striving,
And sprinkling and twinkling and wrinkling,
And sounding and bounding and rounding,
And bubbling and troubling and doubling,
And grumbling and rumbling and tumbling,
And clattering and battering and shattering ;

Retreating and beating and meeting and sheeting,
Delaying and straying and playing and spraying,
Advancing and prancing and glancing and dancing,
Recoiling, turmoiling and toiling and boiling,
And gleaming and streaming and steaming and
beaming,

And rushing and flushing and brushing and gushing,
And flapping and rapping and clapping and slapping
And curling and whirling and purling and twirling,
And thumping and plumping and bumping and
 jumping,
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing ;
And so never ending, but always descending,
Sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending,
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,
And this way the Water comes down at Lodore.

Keswick, 1820.

INSCRIPTIONS

I.—FOR A TABLET ON THE BANKS OF A STREAM

STRANGER ! awhile upon this mossy bank
Recline thee. If the Sun rides high, the breeze,
That loves to ripple o'er the rivulet,
Will play around thy brow, and the cool sound
Of running waters soothe thee. Mark how clear
They sparkle o'er the shallows, and behold
Where o'er their surface wheels with restless speed
Yon glossy insect, on the sand below
How its swift shadow flits. In solitude
The rivulet is pure, and trees and herbs,
Bend o'er its salutary course refresh'd,
But passing on amid the haunts of men,
It finds pollution there, and rolls from thence
A tainted stream.. Seek'st thou for HAPPINESS ?

Go, Stranger, sojourn in the woodland cot
Of INNOCENCE, and thou shalt find her there.

Bristol, 1796.

II.—IN A FOREST

STRANGER ! whose steps have reach'd this solitude,
Know that this lonely spot was dear to one
Devoted with no unrequited zeal
To Nature. Here, delighted he has heard
The rustling of these woods, that now perchance
Melodious to the gale of summer move ;
And underneath their shade on yon smooth rock,
With grey and yellow lichens overgrown,
Often reclined ; watching the silent flow
Of this perspicuous rivulet, that steals
Along its verdant course, . . till all around
Had fill'd his senses with tranquillity,
And ever soothed in spirit he return'd
A happier, better man. Stranger ! perchance,
Therefore the stream more lovely to thine eye
Will glide along, and to the summer gale
The woods wave more melodious. Cleanse thou then
The weeds and mosses from this letter'd stone.

Westbury, 1798.

III.—EPITAPH

HERE in the fruitful vales of Somerset
Was Emma born, and here the Maiden grew
To the sweet season of her womanhood
Beloved and lovely, like a plant whose leaf
And bud and blossom all are beautiful.

In peacefulness her virgin years were past ;
And when in prosperous wedlock she was given,
Amid the Cumbrian mountains far away
She had her summer Bower. 'Twas like a dream
Of old Romance to see her when she plied
Her little skiff on Derwent's glassy lake ;
The roseate evening resting on the hills,
The lake returning back the hues of heaven,
Mountains and vales and waters all imbued
With beauty, and in quietness ; and she,
Nymph-like, amid that glorious solitude
A heavenly presence, gliding in her joy.
But soon a wasting malady began
To prey upon her, frequent in attack,
Yet with such flattering intervals as mock
The hopes of anxious love, and most of all
The sufferer, self-deceived. During those days
Of treacherous respite, many a time hath he,
Who leaves this record of his friend, drawn back
Into the shadow from her social board,
Because too surely in her cheek he saw
The insidious bloom of death ; and then her smiles
And innocent mirth excited deeper grief
Than when long-look'd for tidings came at last,
That, all her sufferings ended, she was laid
Amid Madeira's orange groves to rest.
O gentle Emma ! o'er a lovelier form
Than thine, Earth never closed ; nor e'er did Heaven
Receive a purer spirit from the world.

Keswick, 1810.

IV.—AT BARROSA

THOUGH the four quarters of the world have seen
The British valour proved triumphantly
Upon the French, in many a field far-famed,
Yet may the noble Island in her rolls
Of glory write Barrosa's name. For there,
Not by the issue of deliberate plans
Consulted well, was the fierce conflict won,
Nor by the leader's eye intuitive,
Nor force of either arm of war, nor art
Of skill'd artillerist, nor the discipline
Of troops to absolute obedience train'd ;
But by the spring and impulse of the heart,
Brought fairly to the trial, when all else
Seem'd, like a wrestler's garment, thrown aside ;
By individual courage and the sense
Of honour, their old country's, and their own,
There to be forfeited, or there upheld ; . .
This warm'd the soldier's soul, and gave his hand
The strength that carries with it victory.
More to enhance their praise, the day was fought
Against all circumstance ; a painful march,
Through twenty hours of night and day prolong'd,
Forespent the British troops ; and hope delay'd
Had left their spirits pall'd. But when the word
Was given to turn, and charge, and win the heights ;
The welcome order came to them, like rain
Upon a traveller in the thirsty sands.
Rejoicing, up the ascent, and in the front
Of danger, they with steady step advanced,
And with the insupportable bayonet
Drove down the foe. The vanquish'd Victor saw

And thought of Talavera, and deplored
His eagle lost. But England saw well-pleased
Her old ascendancy that day sustain'd ;
And Scotland shouting over all her hills
Among her worthies rank'd another Graham.

V.—THE STANDARD-BEARER OF THE BUFFS

STEEP is the soldier's path ; nor are the heights
Of glory to be won without long toil
And arduous efforts of enduring hope ;
Save when Death takes the aspirant by the hand,
And cutting short the work of years, at once
Lifts him to that conspicuous eminence.
Such fate was mine.—The standard of the Buffs
I bore at Albuhera, on that day
When, covered by a shower, and fatally
For friends misdeem'd, the Polish lancers fell
Upon our rear. Surrounding me, they claim'd
My precious charge. —“ Not but with life ! ” I cried,
And life was given for immortality.
The flag which to my heart I held, when wet
With that heart's blood, was soon victoriously
Regain'd on that great day. In former times,
Marlborough beheld it borne at Ramilies ;
For Brunswick and for liberty it waved
Triumphant at Culloden ; and hath seen
The lilies on the Caribbean shores
Abased before it. Then too in the front
Of battle did it flap exultingly,
When Douro, with its wide stream interposed,
Saved not the French invaders from attack,
Discomfiture, and ignominious rout.

My name is Thomas : undisgraced have I
Transmitted it. He who in days to come
May bear the honour'd banner to the field,
Will think of Albuhera, and of me.

ODE,

WRITTEN DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH
BUONAPARTE, IN JANUARY 1814

WHO counsels peace at this momentous hour,
When God hath given deliverance to the oppress'd,
And to the injured power ?

Who counsels peace, when Vengeance like a flood
Rolls on, no longer now to be repress'd ;
When innocent blood

From the four corners of the world cries out
For justice upon one accursed head ;

When Freedom hath her holy banners spread
Over all nations, now in one just cause
United ; when with one sublime accord

Europe throws off the yoke abhorr'd,
And Loyalty and Faith and Ancient Laws
Follow the avenging sword !

Woe, woe to England ! woe and endless shame,
If this heroic land,

False to her feelings and unspotted fame,
Hold out the olive to the Tyrant's hand !

Woe to the world, if Buonaparte's throne
Be suffer'd still to stand !

For by what names shall Right and Wrong be known, . .
What new and courtly phrases must we feign
For Falsehood, Murder, and all monstrous crimes,
If that perfidious Corsican maintain
Still his detested reign,
And France, who yearns even now to break her chain,
Beneath his iron rule be left to groan ?
No ! by the innumerable dead,
Whose blood hath for his lust of power been shed,
Death only can for his foul deeds atone ;
That peace which Death and Judgement can bestow,
That peace be Buonaparte's, . . that alone !

For sooner shall the Ethiop change his skin,
Or from the Leopard shall her spots depart,
Than this man change his old flagitious heart.
Have ye not seen him in the balance weigh'd,
And there found wanting ? On the stage of blood
Foremost the resolute adventurer stood ;
And when, by many a battle won,
He placed upon his brow the crown,
Curbing delirious France beneath his sway,
Then, like Octavius in old time,
Fair name might he have handed down,
Effacing many a stain of former crime.
Fool ! should he cast away that bright renown !
Fool ! the redemption proffer'd should he lose !
When Heaven such grace vouchsafed him that the way
To Good and Evil lay
Before him, which to choose.

But Evil was his Good,
For all too long in blood had he been nurst,

And ne'er was earth with verier tyrant curst.
 Bold man and bad,
Remorseless, godless, full of fraud and lies,
And black with murders and with perjuries,
Himself in Hell's whole panoply he clad ;
No law but his own headstrong will he knew,
No counsellor but his own wicked heart.
From evil thus portentous strength he drew,
And trampled under foot all human ties,
 All holy laws, all natural charities.

O France ! beneath this fierce Barbarian's sway
 Disgraced thou art to all succeeding times ;
Rapine, and blood, and fire have mark'd thy way,
 All loathsome, all unutterable crimes.
A curse is on thee, France ! from far and wide
It hath gone up to Heaven. All lands have cried
 For vengeance upon thy detested head !
All nations curse thee, France ! for wheresoe'er
In peace or war thy banner hath been spread,
All forms of human woe have follow'd there.
 The Living and the Dead
Cry out alike against thee ! They who bear,
Crouching beneath its weight, thine iron yoke,
 Join in the bitterness of secret prayer
 The voice of that innumerable throng,
Whose slaughter'd spirits day and night invoke
 The Everlasting Judge of right and wrong,
How long, O Lord ! Holy and Just, how long !

 A merciless oppressor hast thou been,
 Thyself remorselessly oppress'd meantime ;
Greedy of war, when all that thou couldst gain

Was but to dye thy soul with deeper crime,
And rivet faster round thyself the chain.
O blind to honour, and to interest blind,
When thus in abject servitude resign'd
To this barbarian upstart, thou couldst brave
God's justice, and the heart of human kind !
Madly thou thoughtest to enslave the world,
Thyself the while a miserable slave.
Behold the flag of vengeance is unfurl'd !
The dreadful armies of the North advance ;
While England, Portugal, and Spain combined,
Give their triumphant banners to the wind,
And stand victorious in the fields of France.

One man hath been for ten long wretched years
The cause of all this blood and all these tears ;
One man in this most awful point of time
Draws on thy danger, as he caused thy crime.
Wait not too long the event,
For now whole Europe comes against thee bent,
His wiles and their own strength the nations know
Wise from past wrongs, on future peace intent,
The People and the Princes, with one mind,
From all parts move against the general foe :
One act of justice, one atoning blow,
One execrable head laid low,
Even yet, O France ! averts thy punishment.
Open thine eyes ! too long hast thou been blind ;
Take vengeance for thyself, and for mankind !

France ! if thou lovest thine ancient fame,
Revenge thy sufferings and thy shame !
By the bones which bleach on Jaffa's beach ;

By the blood which on Domingo's shore
Hath clogg'd the carrion-birds with gore ;
By the flesh which gorged the wolves of Spain,
Or stiffen'd on the snowy plain
Of frozen Moscow ;
By the bodies which lie all open to the sky,
Tracking from Elbe to Rhine the Tyrant's flight ;
By the widow's and the orphan's cry ;
By the childless parent's misery ;
By the lives which he hath shed ;
By the ruin he hath spread ;
By the prayers which rise for curses on his head ;
Redeem, O France ! thine ancient fame,
Revenge thy sufferings and thy shame,
Open thine eyes ! . . too long hast thou been blind ;
Take vengeance for thyself, and for mankind !

By those horrors which the night
Witness'd, when the torches' light
To the assembled murderers show'd
Where the blood of Condé flow'd ;
By thy murder'd Pichegru's fame ;
By murder'd Wright, . . an English name ;
By murder'd Palm's atrocious doom ;
By murder'd Hofer's martyrdom ;
Oh ! by the virtuous blood thus vilely spilt,
The Villain's own peculiar private guilt,
Open thine eyes ! too long hast thou been blind !
Take vengeance for thyself, and for mankind !

Keswick.

FUNERAL SONG FOR THE PRINCESS
CHARLOTTE OF WALES

IN its summer pride array'd,
Low our Tree of Hope is laid !
Low it lies : . . in evil hour,
Visiting the bridal bower,
Death hath levell'd root and flower.
Windsor, in thy sacred shade,
(This the end of pomp and power !)
Have the rites of death been paid :
Windsor, in thy sacred shade
Is the Flower of Brunswick laid !

Ye whose relics rest around,
Tenants of this funeral ground !
Know ye, Spirits, who is come,
By immitigable doom
Summon'd to the untimely tomb ?
Late with youth and splendour crown'd,
Late in beauty's vernal bloom,
Late with love and joyaunce blest !
Never more lamented guest
Was in Windsor laid to rest.

Henry, thou of saintly worth,
Thou, to whom thy Windsor gave
Nativity and name, and grave ;
Thou art in this hallowed earth
Cradled for the immortal birth ;
Heavily upon his head
Ancestral crimes were visited :

He, in spirit like a child,
Meek of heart and undefiled,
Patiently his crown resign'd,
And fix'd on heaven his heavenly mind,
Blessing, while he kiss'd the rod,
His Redeemer and his God.
Now may he in realms of bliss
Greet a soul as pure as his.

Passive as that humble spirit,
Lies his bold dethroner too ;
A dreadful debt did he inherit
To his injured lineage due ;
Ill-starr'd prince, whose martial merit
His own England long might rue !
Mournful was that Edward's fame,
Won in fields contested well,
While he sought his rightful claim :
Witness Aire's unhappy water,
Where the ruthless Clifford fell ;
And when Wharfe ran red with slaughter,
On the day of Towton's field,
Gathering, in its guilty flood,
The carnage and the ill-spilt blood
That forty thousand lives could yield.
Cressy was to this but sport, . .
Poitiers but a pageant vain ;
And the victory of Spain
Seem'd a strife for pastime meant,
And the work of Agincourt
Only like a tournament ;
Half the blood which there was spent,
Had sufficed again to gain

Anjou and ill-yielded Maine,
Normandy and Aquitaine,
And Our Lady's Ancient towers,
Maugre all the Valois' powers,
Had a second time been ours. . .
A gentle daughter of thy line,
Edward, lays her dust with thine.

Thou, Elizabeth, art here ;
Thou to whom all griefs were known ;
Who wert placed upon the bier
In happier hour than on the throne.
Fatal daughter, fatal mother,
Raised to that ill-omen'd station,
Father, uncle, sons, and brother,
Mourn'd in blood her elevation !
Woodville, in the realms of bliss,
To thine offspring thou may'st say,
Early death is happiness ;
And favour'd in their lot are they
Who are not left to learn below
That length of life is length of woe.
Lightly let this ground be prest ;
A broken heart is here at rest.

But thou, Seymour, with a greeting,
Such as sisters use at meeting,
Joy, and sympathy, and love,
Wilt hail her in the seats above.
Like in loveliness were ye,
By a like lamented doom,
Hurried to an early tomb.
While together, spirits blest,

Here your earthly relics rest,
Fellow angels shall ye be
In the angelic company.

Henry, too, hath here his part ;
At the gentle Seymour's side,
With his best beloved bride,
Cold and quiet, here are laid
The ashes of that fiery heart.
Not with his tyrannic spirit,
Shall our Charlotte's soul inherit ;
No, by Fisher's hoary head,—
By More, the learned and the good,—
By Katharine's wrongs and Boleyn's blood,—
By the life so basely shed
Of the pride of Norfolk's line,
By the axe so often red,
By the fire with martyrs fed,
Hateful Henry, not with thee
May her happy spirit be !

And here lies one whose tragic name
A reverential thought may claim ;
That murder'd Monarch, whom the grave,
Revealing its long secret, gave
Again to sight, that we might spy
His comely face and waking eye !
There, thrice fifty years, it lay,
Exempt from natural decay,
Unclosed and bright, as if to say,
A plague, of bloodier, baser birth,
Than that beneath whose rage he bled,
Was loose upon our guilty earth ;—

Such awful warning from the dead,
Was given by that portentous eye ;
Then it closed eternally.

Ye whose relics rest around,
Tenants of this funeral ground ;
Even in your immortal spheres,
What fresh yearnings will ye feel,
When this earthly guest appears !
Us she leaves in grief and tears ;
But to you will she reveal
Tidings of old England's weal ;
Of a righteous war pursued,
Long, through evil and through good,
With unshaken fortitude ;
Of peace, in battle twice achieved ;
Of her fiercest foe subdued,
And Europe from the yoke reliev'd,
Upon that Brabantine plain !
Such the proud, the virtuous story,
Such the great, the endless glory
Of her father's splendid reign !
He who wore the sable mail,
Might at this heroic tale,
Wish himself on earth again.

One who reverently, for thee,
Raised the strain of bridal verse,
Flower of Brunswick ! mournfully
Lays a garland on thy herse.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF
ROTHA QUILLINAN

ROTHA, after long delays,
Since thy book must cross the Raise,
Down I sit to turn a stave,
Be it gay or be it grave.

Wiser wish than what thy name
Prompts for thee I cannot frame ;
No where find a better theme
Than thy native namesake stream.
Lovelier river is there none
Underneath an English sun ;
From its source it issues bright
Upon hoar Helvellyn's height,
Flowing where its summer voice
Makes the mountain herds rejoice ;
Down the dale it issues then ;
Not polluted there by men ;
While its lucid waters take
Their pastoral course from lake to lake,
Please the eye in every part,
Lull the ear, and soothe the heart,
Till into Windermere sedate
They flow and uncontaminate.
Rotha, such from youth to age
Be thy mortal pilgrimage ;
Thus in childhood blithe and free,
Thus in thy maturity,
Blest and blessing, may it be ;
And a course, in welfare past,
Thus serenely close at last.

TO EDITH MAY SOUTHEY

DEDICATION OF "A TALE OF PARAGUAY"

EDITH ! ten years are number'd, since the day,
Which ushers in the cheerful month of May,
To us by thy dear birth, my daughter dear,
Was blest. Thou therefore didst the name partake
Of that sweet month, the sweetest of the year ;
But fittier was it given thee for the sake
Of a good man, thy father's friend sincere,
Who at the font made answer in thy name.
Thy love and reverence rightly may he claim,
For closely hath he been with me allied
In friendship's holy bonds, from that first hour
When in our youth we met on Tejo's side ;
Bonds which, defying now all Fortune's power,
Time hath not loosen'd, nor will Death divide.

A child more welcome, by indulgent Heaven
Never to parents' tears and prayers was given :
For scarcely eight months at thy happy birth
Had pass'd, since of thy sister we were left, . . .
Our first-born and our only babe, bereft.
Too fair a flower was she for this rude earth !
The features of her beauteous infancy
Have faded from me, like a passing cloud,
Or like the glories of an evening sky :
And seldom hath my tongue pronounced her name
Since she was summon'd to a happier sphere.
But that dear love so deeply wounded then,
I in my soul with silent faith sincere
Devoutly cherish till we meet again.

I saw thee first with trembling thankfulness,
O daughter of my hopes and of my fears !
Press'd on thy senseless cheek a troubled kiss,
And breathed my blessing over thee with tears.
But memory did not long our bliss alloy ;
For gentle nature who had given relief
Wean'd with new love the chasten'd heart from
grief ;
And the sweet season minister'd to joy.

It was a season when their leaves and flowers
The trees as to an Arctic summer spread ;
When chilling wintry winds and snowy showers,
Which had too long usurp'd the vernal hours,
Like spectres from the sight of morning, fled
Before the presence of that joyous May ;
And groves and gardens all the live-long day
Rung with the birds' loud love-songs. Over all,
One thrush was heard from morn till even-fall ;
Thy Mother well remembers when she lay
The happy prisoner of the genial bed,
How from yon lofty poplar's topmost spray
At earliest dawn his thrilling pipe was heard ;
And when the light of evening died away,
That blithe and indefatigable bird
Still his redundant song of joy and love preferr'd.

How I have doted on thine infant smiles
At morning when thine eyes unclosed on mine ;
How, as the months in swift succession roll'd,
I mark'd thy human faculties unfold,
And watch'd the dawning of the light divine ;
And with what artifice of playful guiles

Won from thy lips with still-repeat'd wiles
Kiss after kiss, a reckoning often told, . . .
Something I ween thou know'st ; for thou hast seen
Thy sisters in their turn such fondness prove,
And felt how childhood in its winning years
The attemper'd soul to tenderness can move.
This thou canst tell ; but not the hopes and fears
With which a parent's heart doth overflow, . . .
The thoughts and cares inwoven with that love, . . .
Its nature and its depth, thou dost not, canst not
know.

The years which since thy birth have pass'd away
May well to thy young retrospect appear
A measureless extent : . . . like yesterday
To me, so soon they filled their short career.
To thee discourse of reason have they brought,
With sense of time and change ; and something too
Of this precarious state of things have taught,
Where Man abideth never in one stay ;
And of mortality a mournful thought.
And I have seen thine eyes suffused in grief,
When I have said that with autumnal grey
The touch of old hath mark'd thy father's head ;
That even the longest day of life is brief,
And mine is falling fast into the yellow leaf.

Thy happy nature from the painful thought
With instinct turns, and scarcely canst thou bear
To hear me name the Grave : Thou knowest not
How large a portion of my heart is there !
The faces which I loved in infancy
Are gone ; and bosom-friends of riper age,

With whom I fondly talk'd of years to come,
Summon'd before me to their heritage,
Are in the better world, beyond the tomb.
And I have brethren there, and sisters dear,
And dearer babes. I therefore needs must dwell
Often in thought with those whom still I love so well.

Thus wilt thou feel in thy maturer mind ;
When grief shall be thy portion, thou wilt find
Safe consolation in such thoughts as these, . . .
A present refuge in affliction's hour.
And if indulgent Heaven thy lot should bless
With all imaginable happiness,
Here shalt thou have, my child, beyond all power
Of chance, thy holiest, surest, best delight.
Take therefore now thy Father's latest lay, . . .
Perhaps his last ; . . . and treasure in thine heart
The feelings that its musing strains convey.
A song it is of life's declining day,
Yet meet for youth. Vain passions to excite,
No strains of morbid sentiment I sing,
Nor tell of idle loves with ill-spent breath ;
A reverent offering to the Grave I bring,
And twine a garland for the brow of Death.

Keswick, 1814.

PROEM TO "THE POET'S PILGRIMAGE
TO WATERLOO"

ONCE more I see thee, Skiddaw ! once again
Behold thee in thy majesty serene,
Where like the bulwark of this favour'd plain,
Alone thou standest, monarch of the scene . . .
Thou glorious Mountain, on whose ample breast
The sunbeams love to play, the vapours love to rest !

Once more, O Derwent, to thy awful shores
I come, insatiate of the accustom'd sight ;
And listening as the eternal torrent roars,
Drink in with eye and ear a fresh delight :
For I have wander'd far by land and sea,
In all my wanderings still remembering thee.

Twelve years, (how large a part of man's brief day !)
Nor idly, nor ingloriously spent,
Of evil and of good have held their way,
Since first upon thy banks I pitch'd my tent
Hither I came in manhood's active prime,
And here my head hath felt the touch of time.

Heaven hath with goodly increase blest me here,
Where childless and oppress'd with grief I came ;
With voice of fervent thankfulness sincere
Let me the blessings which are mine proclaim ;
Here I possess, . . what more should I require ?
Books, children, leisure, . . all my heart's desire.

O joyful hour, when to our longing home
The long-expected wheels at length drew nigh !
When the first sound went forth, " They come, they
come ! "

And hope's impatience quicken'd every eye !
" Never had man whom Heaven would heap with
bliss
More glad return, more happy hour than this."

Aloft on yonder bench, with arms disspread,
My boy stood, shouting there his father's name,
Waving his hat around his happy head ;
And there, a younger group, his sisters came :
Smiling they stood with looks of pleased surprise,
While tears of joy were seen in elder eyes.

Soon each and all came crowding round to share
The cordial greeting, the beloved sight ;
What welcomings of hand and lip were there !
And when those overflowings of delight
Subsided to a sense of quiet bliss,
Life hath no purer deeper happiness.

The young companion of our weary way
Found here the end desired of all her ills ;
She who in sickness pining many a day
Hunger'd and thirsted for her native hills,
Forgetful now of sufferings past and pain,
Rejoiced to see her own dear home again.

Recover'd now, the homesick mountaineer
Sate by the playmate of her infancy,
Her twin-like comrade, . . render'd doubly dear
For that long absence ; full of life was she,

With voluble discourse and eager mien
Telling of all the wonders she had seen.

Here silently between her parents stood
My dark-eyed Bertha, timid as a dove ;
And gently oft from time to time she woo'd
Pressure of hand, or word, or look of love,
With impulse shy of bashful tenderness,
Soliciting again the wish'd caress.

The younger twain in wonder lost were they,
My gentle Kate, and my sweet Isabel :
Long of our promised coming, day by day
It had been their delight to hear and tell ;
And now when that long-promised hour was come,
Surprise and wakening memory held them dumb.

For in the infant mind, as in the old,
When to its second childhood life declines,
A dim and troubled power doth Memory hold :
But soon the light of young Remembrance shines
Renew'd, and influences of dormant love
Waken'd within, with quickening influence move.

O happy season theirs, when absence brings
Small feeling of privation, none of pain,
Yet at the present object love re-springs,
As night-closed flowers at morn expand again !
Nor deem our second infancy unblest,
When gradually composed we sink to rest.

Soon they grew blithe as they were wont to be ;
Her old endearments each began to seek :
And Isabel drew near to climb my knee,
And pat with fondling hand her father's cheek ;

With voice and touch and look reviving thus
The feelings which had slept in long disuse.

But there stood one whose heart could entertain
And comprehend the fulness of the joy ;
The father, teacher, playmate, was again
Come to his only and his studious boy :
And he beheld again that mother's eye,
Which with such ceaseless care had watch'd his
infancy.

Bring forth the treasures now, . . a proud display, . .
For rich as Eastern merchants we return !
Behold the black Beguine, the Sister grey,
The Friars whose heads with sober motion turn,
The Ark well-fill'd with all its numerous hives,
Noah and Shem and Ham and Japhet, and their
wives.

The tumbler, loose of limb ; the wrestlers twain ;
And many a toy beside of quaint device,
Which, when his fleecy troops no more can gain
Their pasture on the mountains hoar with ice,
The German shepherd carves with curious knife,
Earning in easy toil the food of frugal life.

It was a group which Richter, had he view'd,
Might have deem'd worthy of his perfect skill ;
The keen impatience of the younger brood,
Their eager eyes and fingers never still ;
The hope, the wonder, and the restless joy
Of those glad girls, and that vociferous boy !

The aged friend serene with quiet smile,
Who in their pleasure finds her own delight ;
The mother's heart-felt happiness the while ;
The aunts, rejoicing in the joyful sight ;
And he who in his gaiety of heart,
With glib and noisy tongue perform'd the showman's
part.

Scoff ye who will ! but let me, gracious Heaven,
Preserve this boyish heart till life's last day !
For so that inward light by Nature given
Shall still direct, and cheer me on my way,
And brightening as the shades of age descend,
Shine forth with heavenly radiance at the end.

This was the morning light vouchsafed, which led
My favour'd footsteps to the Muses' hill,
Whose arduous paths I have not ceased to tread,
From good to better persevering still ;
And if but self-approved, to praise or blame
Indifferent, while I toil for lasting fame.

And O ye nymphs of Castaly divine !
Whom I have dutifully served so long,
Benignant to your votary now incline,
That I may win your ear with gentle song,
Such as, I ween, is ne'er disown'd by you, . .
A low prelusive strain, to nature true.

But when I reach at themes of loftier thought,
And tell of things surpassing earthly sense,
(Which by yourselves, O Muses, I am taught,)
Then aid me with your fuller influence,

And to the height of that great argument,
Support my spirit in her strong ascent !

So may I boldly round my temples bind
The laurel which my master Spenser wore ;
And free in spirit as the mountain wind
That makes my symphony in this lone hour,
No perishable song of triumph raise,
But sing in worthy strains my Country's praise.

FLEMISH LANDSCAPE

FROM "THE POET'S PILGRIMAGE TO WATERLOO"

FOUR horses, aided by the favouring breeze,
Drew our gay vessel, slow and sleek and large ;
Crack goes the whip, the steersman at his ease
Directs the way, and steady went the barge.
Ere evening closed to Bruges thus we came, . .
Fair city, worthy of her ancient fame.

The season of her splendour is gone by,
Yet every where its monuments remain ;
Temples which rear their stately heads on high,
Canals that intersect the fertile plain,
Wide streets and squares, with many a court and hall
Spacious and undefaced, but ancient all.

Time hath not wrong'd her, nor hath Ruin sought
Rudely her splendid structures to destroy,
Save in those recent days with evil fraught,
When Mutability, in drunken joy

Triumphant, and from all restraint released,
Let loose the fierce and many-headed beast.

But for the scars in that unhappy rage
 Inflicted, firm she stands and undecay'd ;
Like our first sires', a beautiful old age
 Is hers, in venerable years array'd ;
And yet to her benignant stars may bring,
What fate denies to man, . . a second spring.

When I may read of tilts in days of old,
 And tourneys graced by chieftains of renown,
Fair dames, grave citizens, and warriors bold,
 If Fancy would pourtray some stately town.
Which for such pomp fit theatre should be,
Fair Bruges, I shall then remember thee.

Nor did thy landscape yield me less delight,
 Seen from the deck as slow it glided by,
Or when beneath us, from thy Belfroy's height,
 Its boundless circle met the bending sky ;
The waters smooth and straight, thy proper boast,
And lines of road-side trees in long perspective lost.

No happier landscape may on earth be seen,
 Rich gardens all around and fruitful groves,
White dwellings trim relieved with lively green,
 The pollard that the Flemish painter loves,
With aspens tall and poplars fair to view,
Casting o'er all the land a grey and willowy hue.

My lot hath lain in scenes sublime and rude,
 Where still devoutly I have served and sought
The Power divine which dwells in solitude.
 In boyhood was I wont, with rapture fraught,

Amid those rocks and woods to wander free,
Where Avon hastens to the Severn sea.

In Cintra also have I dwelt erewhile,
That earthly Eden, and have seen at eve
The sea-mists, gathering round its mountain pile,
Whelm with their billows all below, but leave
One pinnacle sole seen, whereon it stood
Like the Ark on Ararat, above the flood.

And now am I a Cumbrian mountaineer ;
Their wintry garment of unsullied snow
The mountains have put on, the heavens are clear,
And yon dark lake spreads silently below ;
Who sees them only in their summer hour
Sees but their beauties half, and knows not half their
power.

Yet hath the Flemish scene a charm for me
That soothes and wins upon the willing heart ;
Though all is level as the sleeping sea,
A natural beauty springs from perfect art,
And something more than pleasure fills the breast
To see how well-directed toil is blest.

PROSPECT FROM A WINDOW OF GRETA HALL, KESWICK

FROM "A VISION OF JUDGEMENT"

'TWAS at that sober hour when the light of day is
receding,
And from surrounding things the hues wherewith day
has adorn'd them

Fade, like the hopes of youth, till the beauty of earth
is departed :
Pensive, though not in thought, I stood at the
window, beholding
Mountain and lake and vale ; the valley disrobed of
its verdure ;
Derwent retaining yet from eve a glassy reflection
Where his expanded breast, then still and smooth as
a mirror,
Under the woods reposed ; the hills that, calm and
majestic,
Lifted their heads in the silent sky, from far
Glaramara
Bleacrag, and Maidenmawr, to Grizedal and wester-
most Withop.
Dark and distinct they rose. The clouds have
gather'd above them
High in the middle air, huge, purple, pillowy
masses,
While in the west beyond was the last pale tint of the
twilight :
Green as a stream in the glen whose pure and
chrysolite waters
Flow o'er a schistous bed, and serene as the age of
the righteous.
Earth was hush'd and still ; all motion and sound
were suspended :
Neither man was heard, bird, beast, nor humming of
insect,
Only the voice of the Greta, heard only when all is in
stillness.
Pensive I stood and alone, the hour and the scene
had subdued me,

And as I gazed in the west, where Infinity seem'd to
be open,
Yearn'd to be free from time, and felt that this life is
a thralldom.

IN THE WOODS OF PARAGUAY

FROM "A TALE OF PARAGUAY"

THEM thus pursuing where the track may lead,
A human voice arrests upon their way ;
They stop, and thither whence the sounds proceed,
All eyes are turn'd in wonder, . . . not dismay,
For sure such sounds might charm all fear away ;
No nightingale whose brooding mate is nigh,
From some sequester'd bower at close of day,
No lark rejoicing in the orient sky,
Ever pour'd forth so wild a strain of melody.

The voice which through the ringing forest floats
Is one which having ne'er been taught the skill
Of marshalling sweet words to sweeter notes,
Utters all unpremeditate, at will,
A modulated sequence loud and shrill
Of inarticulate and long-breathed sound,
Varying its tones with rise and fall and trill,
Till all the solitary woods around
With that far-piercing power of melody resound.

In mute astonishment attent to hear,
As if by some enchantment held, they stood,
With bending head, fix'd eye, and eager ear,
And hand upraised in warning attitude

To check all speech or step that might intrude
On that sweet strain. Them leaving thus spell-bound,
A little way alone into the wood
The Father ¹ gently moved toward the sound,
Treading with quiet feet upon the grassy ground.

Anon advancing thus the trees between,
He saw beside her bower the songstress wild,
Not distant far, himself the while unseen.
Mooma it was, that happy maiden mild,
Who in the sunshine, like a careless child
Of nature, in her joy was carolling.
A heavier heart than his it had beguiled
So to have heard so fair a creature sing
The strains which she had learnt from all sweet birds
of spring.

For these had been her teachers, these alone ;
And she in many an emulous essay,
At length into a descant of her own
Had blended all their notes, a wild display
Of sounds in rich irregular array ;
And now as blithe as bird in vernal bower,
Pour'd in full flow the unexpressive lay,
Rejoicing in her consciousness of power,
But in the inborn sense of harmony yet more.

In joy had she begun the ambitious song,
With rapid interchange of sink and swell :
And sometimes high the note was raised, and long
Produced, with shake and effort sensible,

¹ The Jesuit Father, Dobrizhoffer. —ED.

As if the voice exulted there to dwell ;
But when she could no more that pitch sustain,
So thrillingly attuned the cadence fell,
That with the music of its dying strain
She moved herself to tears of pleasurable pain.

It might be deem'd some dim presage possess'd
The virgin's soul ; that some mysterious sense
Of change to come, upon her mind impress'd,
Had then call'd forth, ere she departed thence,
A requiem to their days of innocence.
For what thou lovest in thy native shade
There is one change alone that may compensate,
O Mooma, innocent and simple maid,
Only one change, and it will not be long delay'd !

When now the Father issued from the wood
Into that little glade in open sight,
Like one entranced, beholding him, she stood ;
Yet had she more of wonder than affright,
Yet less of wonder than of dread delight,
When thus the actual vision came in view ;
For instantly the maiden read aright
Wherefore he came ; his garb and beard she
knew ;
All that her mother heard had then indeed been true.

Nor was the Father fill'd with less surprise ;
He too strange fancies well might entertain,
When this so fair a creature met his eyes.
He might have thought her not of mortal strain ;
Rather, as bards of yore were wont to feign,
A nymph divine of Mondai's secret stream ;

Or haply of Diana's woodland train :
For in her beauty Mooma such might seem,
Being less a child of earth than like a poet's dream.

No art of barbarous ornament had scarr'd
And stain'd her virgin limbs, or 'fil'd her face
Nor ever yet had evil passion marr'd
In her sweet countenance the natural grace
Of innocence and youth ; nor was there trace
Of sorrow, or of hardening want and care.
Strange was it in this wild and savage place,
Which seem'd to be for beasts a fitting lair,
Thus to behold a maid so gentle and so fair.

Across her shoulders was a hammock flung,
By night it was the maiden's bed, by day
Her only garment. Round her as it hung,
In short unequal folds of loose array,
The open meshes, when she moves, display
Her form. She stood with fix'd and wondering
 eyes,
And trembling like a leaf upon the spray,
Even for excess of joy, with eager cries
She call'd her mother forth to share that glad
 surprise.

Ballads and Metrical Tales

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be,
Her sails from heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock :
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock ;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell ;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day ;
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green ;
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing ;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float ;
Quoth he, " My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go ;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around ;
Quoth Sir Ralph, " The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away,
He scour'd the seas for many a day ;
And now grown rich with plunder'd store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the Sun on high ;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,
So dark it is they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, " It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

" Canst hear," said one, " the breakers roar ?
For methinks we should be near the shore."
" Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound, the swell is strong ;
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
" Oh Christ ! it is the Inchcape Rock !"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair ;
He curst himself in his despair ;
The waves rush in on every side,
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

Bristol, 1802.

LORD WILLIAM

No eye beheld when William plunged
Young Edmund in the stream,
No human ear but William's heard
Young Edmund's drowning scream.

Submissive all the vassals own'd
The murderer for their Lord,
And he as rightful heir possess'd
The house of Erlingford.

The ancient house of Erlingford
Stood in a fair domain,
And Severn's ample waters near
Roll'd through the fertile plain.

And often the way-faring man
Would love to linger there,
Forgetful of his onward road,
To gaze on scenes so fair.

But never could Lord William dare
To gaze on Severn's stream ;
In every wind that swept its waves
He heard young Edmund's scream.

In vain at midnight's silent hour
Sleep closed the murderer's eyes,
In every dream the murderer saw
Young Edmund's form arise.

In vain by restless conscience driven
Lord William left his home,
Far from the scenes that saw his guilt,
In pilgrimage to roam ;

To other climes the pilgrim fled,
But could not fly despair ;
He sought his home again, but peace
Was still a stranger there.

Slow were the passing hours, yet swift
The months appear'd to roll ;
And now the day return'd that shook
With terror William's soul ;

A day that William never felt
Return without dismay,
For well had conscience kalendar'd
Young Edmund's dying day.

A fearful day was that ; the rains
Fell fast with tempest roar,
And the swoln tide of Severn spread
Far on the level shore.

In vain Lord William sought the feast,
In vain he quaff'd the bowl,
And strove with noisy mirth to drown
The anguish of his soul.

The tempest, as its sudden swell
In gusty howlings came,
With cold and death-like feeling seem'd
To thrill his shuddering frame.

Reluctant now, as night came on,
His lonely couch he prest ;
And, wearied out, he sunk to sleep, . .
To sleep . . but not to rest.

Beside that couch his brother's form,
Lord Edmund seem'd to stand,
Such and so pale as when in death
He grasp'd his brother's hand ;

Such and so pale his face as when
With faint and faltering tongue,
To William's care, a dying charge,
He left his orphan son.

"I bade thee with a father's love
My orphan Edmund guard ; . .
Well, William, hast thou kept thy charge !
Take now thy due reward."

He started up, each limb convulsed
With agonising fear ;
He only heard the storm of night, . .
'Twas music to his ear.

When lo ! the voice of loud alarm
His inmost soul appals ;
"What ho ! Lord William, rise in haste !
The water saps thy walls !"

He rose in haste, beneath the walls
He saw the flood appear ;
It hemm'd him round, 'twas midnight now,
No human aid was near.

He heard a shout of joy, for now
A boat approach'd the wall,
And eager to the welcome aid
They crowd for safety all.

"My boat is small," the boatman cried,
"Twill bear but one away ;
Come in, Lord William, and do ye
In God's protection stay."

Strange feeling fill'd them at his voice
Even in that hour of woe,
That, save their Lord, there was not one
Who wish'd with him to go.

But William leapt into the boat,
His terror was so sore ;
"Thou shalt have half my gold," he cried,
"Haste . . haste to yonder shore."

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
Went light along the stream ;
Sudden Lord William heard a cry
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

The boatman paused, "Methought I heard
A child's distressful cry !"
"'Twas but the howling wind of night,"
Lord William made reply.

"Haste . . haste . . ply swift and strong the oar ;
Haste . . haste across the stream !"
Again Lord William heard a cry
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

“ I heard a child’s distressful voice,”

The boatman cried again.

“ Nay, hasten on . . the night is dark . .

And we should search in vain.”

“ O God ! Lord William, dost thou know

How dreadful ’tis to die ?

And canst thou without pity hear

A child’s expiring cry ?

“ How horrible it is to sink

Beneath the closing stream,

To stretch the powerless arms in vain,

In vain for help to scream ! ”

The shriek again was heard : it came

More deep, more piercing loud ;

That instant o’er the flood the moon

Shone through a broken cloud ;

And near them they beheld a child ;

Upon a crag he stood,

A little crag, and all around

Was spread the rising flood.

The boatman plied the oar, the boat

Approach’d his resting-place ;

The moon-beam shone upon the child,

And show’d how pale his face.

“ Now reach thine hand ! ” the boatman cried,

“ Lord William, reach and save ! ”

The child stretch’d forth his little hands

To grasp the hand he gave.

Then William shriek'd ; the hands he felt
Were cold and damp and dead !
He held young Edmund in his arms
A heavier weight than lead.

The boat sunk down, the murderer sunk
Beneath the avenging stream ;
He rose, he shriek'd, no human ear
Heard William's drowning scream.

Westbury, 1798.

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found ;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by ;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
“ 'Tis some poor fellow's skull,” said he,
“ Who fell in the great victory.

“ I find them in the garden,
For there’s many here about ;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out !
For many thousand men,” said he,
“ Were slain in that great victory.”

“ Now tell us what ’twas all about,”
Young Peterkin, he cries ;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
“ Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.”

“ It was the English,” Kaspar cried,
“ Who put the French to rout ;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out ;
But every body said,” quoth he,
“ That ’twas a famous victory.

“ My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by ;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly ;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

“ With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died ;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

“ They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won ;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun ;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

“ Great praise the Duke of Marlbro’ won,
And our good Prince Eugene.”
“ Why ’twas a very wicked thing ! ”
Said little Wilhelmine.
“ Nay . . nay . . my little girl,” quoth he,
“ It was a famous victory.

“ And every body praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win.”
“ But what good came of it at last ? ”
Quoth little Peterkin.
“ Why that I cannot tell,” said he,
“ But ’twas a famous victory.”

Westbury, 1798.

QUEEN ORRACA

I

THE Friars five have girt their loins,
And taken staff in hand ;
And never shall those Friars again
Hear mass in Christian land.

They went to Queen Orraca,
To thank her and bless her then ;
And Queen Orraca in tears
Knelt to the holy men.

“ Three things, Queen Orraca,
We prophesy to you :
Hear us, in the name of God !
For time will prove them true

“ In Morocco we must martyr'd be ;
Christ hath vouchsafed it thus :
We shall shed our blood for Him
Who shed His blood for us.

“ To Coimbra shall our bodies be brought,
Such being the will divine ;
That Christians may behold and feel
Blessings at our shrine.

“ And when unto that place of rest
Our bodies shall draw nigh,
Who sees us first, the King or you,
That one that night must die.

“ Fare thee well, Queen Orraca !
For thy soul a mass we will say,
Every day as long as we live,
And on thy dying day.”

The Friars they blest her, one by one,
Where she knelt on her knee,
And they departed to the land
Of the Moors beyond the sea.

2

“What news, O King Affonso,
What news of the Friars five ?
Have they preach'd to the Miramamolin ;
And are they still alive ?”

“They have fought the fight, O Queen !
They have run the race ;
In robes of white they hold the palm
Before the throne of Grace.

“All naked in the sun and air
Their mangled bodies lie ;
What Christian dared to bury them,
By the bloody Moors would die.”

3

“What news, O King Affonso,
Of the Martyrs five what news ?
Doth the bloody Miramamolin
Their burial still refuse ?”

“That on a dunghill they should rot,
The bloody Moor decreed ;
That their dishonour'd bodies should
The dogs and vultures feed :

“But the thunder of God roll'd over them,
And the lightning of God flash'd round ;
Nor thing impure, nor man impure,
Could approach the holy ground.

“A thousand miracles appall’d
The cruel Pagan’s mind ;
Our brother Pedro brings them here,
In Coimbra to be shrined.”

4

Every altar in Coimbra
Is drest for the festival day ;
All the people in Coimbra
Are dight in their richest array ;

Every bell in Coimbra
Doth merrily, merrily, ring ;
The Clergy and the Knights await,
To go forth with the Queen and the King.

“Come forth, come forth, Queen Orraca !
We make the procession stay.”

“I beseech thee, King Affonso,
Go you alone to-day.

“I have pain in my head this morning,
I am ill at heart also :
Go without me, King Affonso,
For I am too faint to go.”

“The relics of the Martyrs five
All maladies can cure ;
They will requite the charity
You show’d them once, be sure :

“Come forth then, Queen Orraca !
You make the procession stay :
It were a scandal and a sin
To abide at home to-day.”

Upon her palfrey she is set,
And forward then they go ;
And over the long bridge they pass,
And up the long hill wind slow.

“ Prick forward, King Affonso,
And do not wait for me ;
To meet them close by Coimbra,
It were discourtesy ;

“ A little while I needs must wait,
Till this sore pain be gone ; . . .
I will proceed the best I can,
But do you and your Knights prick on.”

The King and his Knights prick'd up the hill
Faster than before ;
The King and his Knights have topt the hill,
And now they are seen no more.

As the King and his Knights went down the hill
A wild boar crost the way ;
“ Follow him ! follow him ! ” cried the King ;
“ We have time by the Queen's delay ! ”

A-hunting of the boar astray
Is King Affonso gone :
Slowly, slowly, but straight the while,
Queen Orraca is coming on.

And winding now the train appears
Between the olive-trees :
Queen Orraca alighted then,
And fell upon her knees.

The Friars of Alanquer came first,
And next the relics past ; . .
Queen Orraca look'd to see
The King and his Knights come last.

She heard the horses tramp behind ;
At that she turn'd her face :
King Affonso and his Knights came up
All panting from the chase.

“ Have pity upon my poor soul,
Holy Martyrs five ! ” cried she :
“ Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Virgin, pray for me ! ”

5

That day in Coimbra
Many a heart was gay ;
But the heaviest heart in Coimbra
Was that poor Queen's that day.

The festival is over,
The sun hath sunk in the west ;
All the people in Coimbra
Have betaken themselves to rest.

Queen Orraca's Father Confessor
At midnight is awake ;
Kneeling at the Martyrs' shrine,
And praying for her sake.

Just at the midnight hour, when all
Was still as still could be,
Into the Church of Santa Cruz,
Came a saintly company :

All in robes of russet grey,
 Poorly were they dight ;
Each one girdled with a cord,
 Like a Friar Minorite.

But from those robes of russet grey,
 'There flow'd a heavenly light ;
For each one was the blessed soul
 Of a Friar Minorite.

Brighter than their brethren,
 Among the beautiful band :
Five were there who each did bear
 A palm branch in his hand.

He who led the brethren,
 A living man was he ;
And yet he shone the brightest
 Of all the company.

Before the steps of the altar,
 Each one bow'd his head ;
And then with solemn voice they sung
 The Service of the Dead.

“ And who are ye, ye blessed Saints ? ”
 The Father Confessor said ;
“ And for what happy soul sing ye
 The Service of the Dead ? ”

“ These are the souls of our brethren in bliss,
 The Martyrs five are we :
And this is our father Francisco,
 Among us bodily !

“ We are come hither to perform
Our promise to the Queen ;
Go thou to King Affonso,
And say what thou hast seen.”

There was loud knocking at the door,
As the heavenly vision fled ;
And the porter called to the Confessor,
To tell him the Queen was dead.

Bristol, 1803.

HENRY THE HERMIT

IT was a little island where he dwelt,
A solitary islet, bleak and bare,
Short scanty herbage spotting with dark spots
Its grey stone surface. Never mariner
Approach'd that rude and uninviting coast,
Nor ever fisherman his lonely bark
Anchor'd beside its shore. It was a place
Befitting well a rigid anchoret,
Dead to the hopes and vanities and joys,
And purposes of life : and he had dwelt
Many long years upon that lonely isle ;
For in ripe manhood he abandon'd arms,
Honours and friends and country and the world,
And had grown old in solitude. That isle
Some solitary man in other times
Had made his dwelling-place ; and Henry found
The little chapel which his toil had built

Now by the storms unroof'd, his bed of leaves
Wind-scatter'd ; and his grave o'ergrown with grass,
And thistles, whose white seeds there wing'd in vain,
Wither'd on rocks, or in the waves were lost.
So he repair'd the chapel's ruin'd roof,
Clear'd the grey lichens from the altar-stone,
And underneath a rock that shelter'd him
From the sea-blast, he built his hermitage.

The peasants from the shore would bring him food,
And beg his prayers ; but human converse else
He knew not in that utter solitude ;
Nor ever visited the haunts of men,
Save when some sinful wretch on a sick bed
Implored his blessing and his aid in death.
That summons he delay'd not to obey,
Though the night tempest or autumnal wind
Madden'd the waves ; and though the mariner,
Albeit relying on his saintly load,
Grew pale to see the peril. Thus he lived
A most austere and self-denying man,
Till abstinence and age and watchfulness
Had worn him down, and it was pain at last
To rise at midnight from his bed of leaves
And bend his knees in prayer. Yet not the less,
Though with reluctance of infirmity,
Rose he at midnight from his bed of leaves
And bent his knees in prayer ; but with more zeal,
More self-condemning fervour, raised his voice
Imploring pardon for the natural sin
Of that reluctance, till the atoning prayer
Had satisfied his heart, and given it peace,
And the repented fault became a joy.

One night upon the shore his chapel-bell
Was heard ; the air was calm, and its far sounds
Over the water came, distinct and loud.
Alarm'd at that unusual hour to hear
Its toll irregular, a monk arose,
And crost to the island-chapel. On a stone
Henry was sitting there, dead, cold, and stiff,
The bell-rope in his hand, and at his feet
The lamp that stream'd a long unsteady light.

Westbury, 1799.

GOD'S JUDGEMENT ON A WICKED BISHOP

THE summer and autumn had been so wet,
That in winter the corn was growing yet,
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last-year's store,
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnish'd well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay ;
He bade them to his great Barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flock'd from far and near ;

The great Barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door ;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the Barn and burnt them all.

“ I’faith ’tis an excellent bonfire ! ” quoth he,
“ And the country is greatly obliged to me,
For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of Rats that only consume the corn.”

So then to his palace returned he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man ;
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning as he enter’d the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the Rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he look’d there came a man from his farm
He had a countenance white with alarm ;
“ My Lord, I open’d your granaries this morn,
And the Rats had eaten all your corn.”

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be,
“ Fly ! my Lord Bishop, fly,” quoth he,
“ Ten thousand Rats are coming this way, . .
The Lord forgive you for yesterday ! ”

"I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he,
" 'Tis the safest place in Germany ;
The walls are high and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong and the water deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hasten'd away,
And he crost the Rhine without delay,
And reach'd his tower, and barr'd with care
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes ; . .
But soon a scream made him arise,
He started and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

He listen'd and look'd ; . . . it was only the Cat ;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear
At the Army of Rats that were drawing near.

For they have swam over the river so deep,
And they have climb'd the shores so steep,
And up the Tower their way is bent,
To do the work for which they were sent.

They are not to be told by the dozen or score,
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more,
Such numbers had never been heard of before,
Such a judgement had never been witness'd of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
As louder and louder drawing near
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

And in at the windows and in at the door,
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,
And down from the ceiling and up through the floor
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones ;
They gnaw'd the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgement on him !

Westbury, 1799.

BROUGH BELLS

ONE day to Helbeck I had stroll'd
Among the Crossfell hills,
And resting in its rocky grove
Sat listening to the rills ;

The while to their sweet undersong
The birds sang blithe around,
And the soft west wind awoke the wood
To an intermitting sound.

Louder or fainter as it rose,
Or died away, was borne
The harmony of merry bells,
From Brough that pleasant morn.

“ Why are the merry bells of Brough,
My friend, so few ? ” said I,
“ They disappoint the expectant ear,
Which they should gratify.

“ One, two, three, four ; one, two, three, four ;
’Tis still one, two, three, four,
Mellow and silvery are the tones ;
But I wish the bells were more ! ”

“ What ! art thou critical ? ” quoth he ;
“ Eschew that heart’s disease
That seeketh for displeasure where
The intent hath been to please.

“ By those four bells there hangs a tale,
Which being told, I guess,
Will make thee hear their scanty peal
With proper thankfulness.

“ Not by the Cliffords were they given,
Nor by the Tuftons’ line ;
Thou hearest in that peal the crune
Of old John Brunskill’s kine.

“ On Stanemore’s side one summer eve,
John Brunskill sate to see
His herds in yonder Borrodale
Come winding up the lea.

“ Behind them on the lowland’s verge,
In the evening light serene ;
Brough’s silent tower, then newly built
By Blenkinsop, was seen.

“ Slowly they came in long array,
With loitering pace at will ;
At times a low from them was heard,
Far off, for all was still.

“ The hills return’d that lonely sound
Upon the tranquil air :
The only sound it was, which then
Awoke the echoes there.

“ ‘ Thou hear’st that lordly Bull of mine,
Neighbour,’ quoth Brunskill then ;
‘ How loudly to the hills he crunes,
That crune to him again.

“ ‘ Thinkest thou if yon whole herd at once
Their voices should combine,
Were they at Brough, that we might not
Hear plainly from this upland spot
That cruning of the kine ?’

“ ‘ That were a crune, indeed,’ replied
His comrade, ‘ which, I ween,
Might at the Spital well be heard,
And in all dales between.

“ ‘ Up Mallerstang to Eden’s springs,
The eastern wind upon its wings
The mighty voice would bear ;
And Appleby would hear the sound,
Methinks, when skies are fair.’

“ ‘ Then shall the herd,’ John Brunskill cried,
 ‘ From yon dumb steeple crune,
And thou and I, on this hill-side,
 Will listen to their tune.

“ ‘ So while the merry Bells of Brough,
 For many an age ring on,
John Brunskill will remember’d be,
 When he is dead and gone ;

“ ‘ As one who in his latter years,
 Contented with enough,
Gave freely what he well could spare
 To buy the Bells of Brough.’

“ Thus it hath proved : three hundred years
 Since then have pass’d away,
And Brunskill’s is a living name
 Among us to this day.”

“ More pleasure,” I replied, “ shall I
 From this time forth partake,
When I remember Helbeck woods,
 For old John Brunskill’s sake.

“ He knew how wholesome it would be,
 Among these wild wide fells,
And upland vales, to catch, at times,
 The sound of Christian bells ;

“ What feelings and what impulses
 Their cadence might convey,
To herdsman or to shepherd boy,
Whiling in indolent employ
 The solitary day ;

“ That when his brethren were convened
To meet for social prayer,
He too, admonish'd by the call,
In spirit might be there.

“ Or when a glad thanksgiving sound,
Upon the winds of Heaven,
Was sent to speak a Nation's joy,
For some great blessing given—

“ For victory by sea or land,
And happy peace at length ;
Peace by his country's valour won,
And 'stablish'd by her strength ;

“ When such exultant peals were borne
Upon the mountain air,
The sound should stir his blood, and give
An English impulse there.”

Such thoughts were in the old man's mind,
When he that eve look'd down
From Stanemore's side on Borrodale,
And on the distant town.

And had I store of wealth, methinks,
Another herd of kine,
John Brunskill, I would freely give,
That they might crune with thine.

THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE

A WELL there is in the west country,
And a clearer one never was seen ;
There is not a wife in the west country
But has heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm tree stand beside,
And behind doth an ash-tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne ;
Joyfully he drew nigh,
For from cock-crow he had been travelling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he,
And he sat down upon the bank
Under the willow-tree.

There came a man from the house hard by
At the Well to fill his pail ;
On the Well-side he rested it,
And he bade the Stranger hail.

"Now art thou a bachelor, Stranger ?" quoth he,
"For an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drank this day
That ever thou didst in thy life.

“ Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast,
Ever here in Cornwall been ?
For an if she have, I'll venture my life
She has drank of the Well of St. Keyne.”

“ I have left a good woman who never was here,”
The Stranger he made reply,
“ But that my draught should be the better for that,
I pray you answer me why ? ”

“ St. Keyne,” quoth the Cornish-man, “ many a time
Drank of this crystal Well,
And before the Angel summon'd her,
She laid on the water a spell.

“ If the Husband of this gifted Well
Shall drink before his Wife,
A happy man thenceforth is he,
For he shall be Master for life.

“ But if the Wife should drink of it first, . .
God help the Husband then ! ”
The Stranger stoopt to the Well of St. Keyne,
And drank of the water again.

“ You drank of the Well I warrant betimes ? ”
He to the Cornish-man said :
But the Cornish-man smiled as the Stranger spake,
And sheepishly shook his head.

“ I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,
And left my Wife in the porch ;
But i' faith she had been wiser than me,
For she took a bottle to Church.”

Westbury, 1798.

From "Thalaba the Destroyer"

I. —THE DESERT-CIRCLE

How beautiful is night !
A dewy freshness fills the silent air ;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven ;
In full-orb'd glory yonder Moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert-circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night !

Who at this untimely hour
Wanders o'er the desert sands ?
No station is in view,
Nor palm-grove, islanded amid the waste.
The mother and her child,
The widow'd mother and the fatherless boy
They at this untimely hour
Wander o'er the desert sands.

Alas ! the setting sun
Saw Zeinab in her bliss,

Hodeirah's wife beloved.
 Alas ! the wife beloved,
 The fruitful mother late,
 Whom when the daughters of Arabia named,
 They wish'd their lot like hers,
 She wanders o'er the desert sands
 A wretched widow now ;
 The fruitful mother of so fair a race,
 With only one preserved,
 She wanders o'er the wilderness.

No tear relieved the burthen of her heart ;
 Stunn'd with the heavy woe, she felt like one
 Half-waken'd from a midnight dream of blood.
 But sometimes when the boy
 Would wet her hand with tears,
 And, looking up to her fix'd countenance,
 Sob out the name of Mother ! then she groan'd.
 At length collecting, Zeinab turn'd her eyes
 To heaven, and praised the Lord ;
 " He gave, He takes away ! "
 The pious sufferer cried,
 " The Lord our God is good ! "

" Good is He ! " quoth the boy :
 " Why are my brethren and my sisters slain ?
 Why is my father kill'd ?
 Did ever we neglect our prayers,
 Or ever lift a hand unclean to Heaven ?
 Did ever stranger from our tent
 Unwelcomed turn away ?
 Mother, He is not good ! "

Then Zeinab beat her breast in agony,
 "O God, forgive the child !
 He knows not what he says ;
 Thou know'st I did not teach him thoughts like these ;
 O Prophet, pardon him !"

She had not wept till that assuaging prayer, . .
 The fountains of her grief were open'd then,
 And tears relieved her heart.
 She raised her swimming eyes to Heaven,
 "Allah, thy will be done !
 Beneath the dispensations of that will
 I groan, but murmur not.
 A day will come, when all things that are dark
 Will be made clear ; . . then shall I know, O Lord !
 Why in thy mercy thou hast stricken me ;
 Then see and understand what now
 My heart believes and feels."

Young Thalaba in silence heard reproof ;
 His brow in manly frowns was knit,
 With manly thoughts his heart was full.
 "Tell me who slew my father ?" cried the boy.
 Zeinab replied and said,
 "I knew not that there lived thy father's foe.
 The blessings of the poor for him
 Went daily up to Heaven ;
 In distant lands the traveller told his praise ; . .
 I did not think there lived
 Hodeirah's enemy."

"But I will hunt him through the world !"
 Young Thalaba exclaim'd.

" Already I can bend my father's bow ;
 Soon will my arm have strength
 To drive the arrow-feathers to his heart."

Zeinab replied, " O Thalaba, my child,
 Thou lookest on to distant days,
 And we are in the desert, far from men ! "

Not till that moment her afflicted heart
 Had leisure for the thought.
 She cast her eyes around,
 Alas ! no tents were there
 Beside the bending sands,
 No palm-tree rose to spot the wilderness ;
 The dark blue sky closed round,
 And rested like a dome
 Upon the circling waste.
 She cast her eyes around,
 Famine and Thirst were there ;
 And then the wretched Mother bow'd her head,
 And wept upon her child.

II.—ABDALDAR THE SORCERER ATTEMPTS THE LIFE OF THALABA

FROM tribe to tribe, from town to town,
 From tent to tent, Abdaldar pass'd.
 Him every morn the all-beholding Eye
 Saw from his couch, unhallow'd by a prayer,
 Rise to the scent of blood ;
 And every night lie down,
 That rankling hope within him, that by day
 Goaded his steps, still stinging him in sleep, -

And startling him with vain accomplishment
 From visions still the same.
 Many a time his wary hand
 To many a youth applied the Ring ;¹
 And still the imprison'd Fire
 Within its crystal socket lay comprest,
 Impatient to be free.

At length to the cords of a tent,
 That were stretch'd by an Island of Palms,
 In the desolate sea of the sands,
 The seemingly Traveller came.
 Under a shapely palm,
 Herself as shapely, there a Damsel stood ;
 She held her ready robe,
 And look'd towards a Boy,
 Who from the tree above,
 With one hand clinging to its trunk,
 Cast with the other down the cluster'd dates.

The Magician approach'd the Tree,
 He lean'd on his staff, like a way-faring man,
 And the sweat of his travel was seen on his brow
 He ask'd for food, and lo !
 The Damsel proffers him her lap of dates ;
 And the Stripling descends, and runs to the tent,
 And brings him forth water, the draught of delight.

Anon the Master of the tent,
 The Father of the family,

¹ A magic ring of crystal, with a central eye of fire ; if the wearer should touch Thalaba, the fire would be quenched.—ED.

Came forth, a man in years, of aspect mild.
 To the stranger approaching he gave
 The friendly saluting of peace,
 And bade the skin be spread.
 Before the tent they spread the skin,
 Under a Tamarind's shade,
 That, bending forward, stretch'd
 Its boughs of beauty far.

They brought the Traveller rice,
 With no false colours tinged to tempt the eye,
 But white as the new-fallen snow,
 When never yet the sullyng Sun
 Hath seen its purity,
 Nor the warm zephyr touch'd and tainted it.
 The dates of the grove before their guest
 They laid, and the luscious fig,
 And water from the well.

The Damsel from the Tamarind tree
 Had pluck'd its acid fruit,
 And steep'd it in water long ;
 And whoso drank of the cooling draught,
 He would not wish for wine.
 This to their guest the Damsel brought,
 And a modest pleasure kindled her cheek,
 When raising from the cup his moisten'd lips,
 The stranger smiled, and praised, and drank again.

Whither is gone the Boy ?
 He had pierced the Melon's pulp,
 And closed with wax the wound,
 And he had duly gone at morn

And watch'd its ripening rind,
 And now all joyfully he brings
 The treasure now matured ;
 His dark eyes sparkling with a boy's delight,
 As out he pours its liquid lusciousness,
 And proffers to the guest.

Abdaldar ate, and he was satisfied :
 And now his tongue discoursed
 Of regions far remote,
 As one whose busy feet had travell'd long.
 The Father of the family,
 With a calm eye and quiet smile,
 Sate pleased to hearken him.
 The Damsel who removed the meal,
 She loiter'd on the way,
 And listen'd with full hands
 A moment motionless.

All eagerly the Boy
 Watches the Traveller's lips ;
 And still the wily man
 With seemly kindness, to the eager Boy
 Directs his winning tale.
 Ah, cursed one ! if this be he,
 If thou hast found the object of thy search,
 Thy hate, thy bloody aim, . . .
 Into what deep damnation wilt thou plunge
 Thy miserable soul ! . . .

Look ! how his eye delighted watches thine ! . .
 Look ! how his open lips
 Gape at the winning tale ! . .

And nearer now he comes,
 To lose no word of that delightful talk.
 Then, as in familiar mood,
 Upon the stripling's arm
 The Sorcerer laid his hand,
 And the Fire of the Crystal fled.

While the sudden shoot of joy
 Made pale Abdaldar's cheek,
 The Master's voice was heard ;
 " It is the hour of prayer, . .
 My children, let us purify ourselves,
 And praise the Lord our God ! "
 The Boy the water brought ;
 After the law they purified themselves,
 And bent their faces to the earth in prayer.

All, save Abdaldar ; over Thalaba
 He stands, and lifts the dagger to destroy.
 Before his lifted arm received
 Its impulse to descend,
 The Blast of the Desert came.
 Prostrate in prayer, the pious family
 Felt not the Simoom pass.
 They rose, and lo ! the Sorcerer lying dead,
 Holding the dagger in his blasted hand.

III.—LIFE IN AN ARAB TENT

THUS peacefully the vernal years
 Of Thalaba pass'd on,
 Till now, without an effort, he could bend
 Hodeirah's stubborn bow.

Black were his eyes and bright,
 The sunny hue of health
 Glow'd on his tawny cheek,
 His lip was darken'd by maturing life ;
 Strong were his shapely limbs, his stature tall ;
 Peerless among Arabian youths was he.

Compassion for the child
 Had first old Moath's kindly heart possess'd,
 An orphan, wailing in the wilderness ;
 But when he heard his tale, his wondrous tale,
 Told by the Boy, with such eye-speaking truth,
 Now with sudden burst of anger,
 Now in the agony of tears,
 And now with flashes of prophetic joy,
 What had been pity became reverence then,
 And, like a sacred trust from Heaven,
 The Old Man cherish'd him.
 Now, with a father's love,
 Child of his choice, he loved the Boy,
 And, like a father, to the Boy was dear.
 Oneiza call'd him brother ; and the youth
 More fondly than a brother loved the maid ;
 The loveliest of Arabian maidens she.
 How happily the years
 Of Thalaba went by !

It was the wisdom and the will of Heaven,
 That in a lonely tent had cast
 The lot of Thalaba ;
 There might his soul develop best
 Its strengthening energies ;
 There might he from the world

Keep his heart pure and uncontaminate,
Till at the written hour he should be found
Fit servant of the Lord, without a spot.

Years of his youth, how rapidly ye fled
In that beloved solitude !
Is the morn fair, and doth the freshening breeze
Flow with cool current o'er his cheek ?
Lo ! underneath the broad-leaved sycamore
With lids half-closed he lies,
Dreaming of days to come.
His dog beside him, in mute blandishment,
Now licks his listless hand ;
Now lifts an anxious and expectant eye,
Courting the wonted caress.

Or comes the Father of the Rains
From his caves in the uttermost West,
Comes he in darkness and storms ?
When the blast is loud ;
When the waters fill
The traveller's tread in the sands ;
When the pouring shower
Streams adown the roof ;
When the door-curtain hangs in heavier folds :
When the out-strain'd tent flags loosely :
Within there is the embers' cheerful glow,
The sound of the familiar voice,
The song that lightens toil, . . .
Domestic Peace and Comfort are within.
Under the common shelter, on dry sand,
The quiet Camels ruminate their food ;
The lengthening cord from Moath falls,

As patiently the Old Man
 Entwines the strong palm-fibres ; by the hearth
 The Damsel shakes the coffee-grains,
 That with warm fragrance fill the tent ;
 And while, with dexterous fingers, Thalaba
 Shapes the green basket, haply at his feet
 Her favourite kidling gnaws the twig,
 Forgiven plunderer, for Oneiza's sake.

Or when the winter torrent rolls
 Down the deep-channel'd rain-course, foamingly,
 Dark with its mountain spoils,
 With bare feet pressing the wet sand,
 There wanders Thalaba,
 The rushing flow, the flowing roar,
 Filling his yielded faculties,
 A vague, a dizzy, a tumultuous joy.

Or lingers it a vernal brook
 Gleaming o'er yellow sands ?
 Beneath the lofty bank reclined,
 With idle eye he views its little waves,
 Quietly listening to the quiet flow ;
 While in the breathings of the stirring gale,
 The tall canes bend above,
 Floating like streamers on the wind
 Their lank uplifted leaves.

Nor rich, nor poor, was Moath ; God hath given
 Enough, and blest him with a mind content.
 No hoarded gold disquieted his dreams :
 But ever round his station he beheld
 Camels that knew his voice,

And home-birds, grouping at Oneiza's call,
 And goats that, morn and eve,
 Came with full udders to the Damsel's hand.
 Dear child ! the tent beneath whose shade they dwelt
 It was her work ; and she had twined
 His girdle's many hues ;
 And he had seen his robe
 Grow in Oneiza's loom.

How often, with a memory-mingled joy
 Which made her Mother live before his sight,
 He watch'd her nimble fingers thread the woof !
 Or at the hand-mill, when she knelt and toil'd,
 Toss'd the thin cake on spreading palm,
 Or fix'd it on the glowing oven's side
 With bare wet arm, and safe dexterity.

'Tis the cool evening hour :
 The Tamarind from the dew
 Sheathes its young fruit, yet green.
 Before their tent the mat is spread ;
 The Old Man's solemn voice
 Intones the holy Book.

What if beneath no lamp-illumined dome,
 Its marble walls bedeck'd with flourish'd truth,
 Azure and gold adornment ? sinks the word
 With deeper influence from the Imam's voice,
 Where in the day of congregation, crowds
 Perform the duty-task ?
 Their Father is their Priest,
 The Stars of Heaven their point of prayer,
 And the blue Firmament
 The glorious Temple, where they feel
 The present Deity.

Yet through the purple glow of eve
 Shines dimly the white moon.
 The slacken'd bow, the quiver, the long lance,
 Rest on the pillar of the Tent.
 Knitting light palm-leaves for her brother's brow,
 The dark-eyed damsel sits ;
 The Old Man tranquilly
 Up his curl'd pipe inhales
 The tranquillizing herb.
 So listen they the reed of Thalaba,
 While his skill'd fingers modulate
 The low, sweet, soothing, melancholy tones.

Or if he strung the pearls of Poesy,
 Singing with agitated face
 And eloquent arms, and sobs that reach the heart,
 A tale of love and woe ;
 Then, if the brightening Moon that lit his face,
 In darkness favour'd hers,
 Oh ! even with such a look, as fables say,
 The Mother Ostrich fixes on her egg,
 Till that intense affection
 Kindle its light of life,
 Even in such deep and breathless tenderness
 Oneiza's soul is centred on the youth,
 So motionless, with such an ardent gaze, . .
 Save when from her full eyes
 She wipes away the swelling tears
 That dim his image there.

She call'd him Brother ; was it sister-love
 For which the silver rings
 Round her smooth ankles and her tawny arms,

Shone daily brighten'd? for a brother's eye
 Were her long fingers tinged,
 As when she trimm'd the lamp,
 And through the veins and delicate skin
 The light shone rosy? that the darken'd lids
 Gave yet a softer lustre to her eye?
 That with such pride she trick'd
 Her glossy tresses, and on holy-day
 Wreathed the red flower-crown round
 Their waves of glossy jet?
 How happily the days
 Of Thalaba went by!
 Years of his youth how rapidly ye fled!

IV.—THALABA FINDS THE SORCERESS MAIMUNA SPINNING

COLD! cold! 'tis a chilly clime
 That the youth in his journey hath reach'd,
 And he is aweary now,
 And faint for lack of food.
 Cold! cold! there is no Sun in heaven,
 A heavy and uniform cloud
 Overspreads the face of the sky,
 And the snows are beginning to fall.
 Dost thou wish for thy deserts, O Son of Hodeirah?
 Dost thou long for the gales of Arabia?
 Cold! cold! his blood flows languidly,
 His hands are red, his lips are blue,
 His feet are sore with the frost.
 Cheer thee! cheer thee! Thalaba!
 A little yet bear up!

All waste ! no sign of life
 But the track of the wolf and the bear !
 No sound but the wild, wild wind,
 And the snow crunching under his feet !
 Night is come ; neither moon, nor stars,
 Only the light of the snow !
 But behold a fire in a cave of the hill,
 A heart-reviving fire ;
 And thither with strength renew'd
 Thalaba presses on.

He found a Woman in the cave,
 A solitary Woman,
 Who by the fire was spinning,
 And singing as she spun.
 The pine boughs were cheerfully blazing,
 And her face was bright with the flame ;
 Her face was as a Damsel's face,
 And yet her hair was grey.
 She bade him welcome with a smile,
 And still continued spinning,
 And singing as she spun.
 The thread the woman drew
 Was finer than the silkworm's,
 Was finer than the gossamer ;
 The song she sung was low and sweet,
 But Thalaba knew not the words.

He laid his bow before the hearth,
 For the string was frozen stiff ;
 He took the quiver from his neck,
 For the arrow-plumes were iced.
 Then as the cheerful fire

Revived his languid limbs,
 The adventurer ask'd for food.
 The Woman answer'd him,
 And still her speech was song :
 "The She Bear she dwells near to me,
 And she hath cubs, one, two, and three ;
 She hunts the deer, and brings him here,
 And then with her I make good cheer ;
 And now to the chase the She Bear is gone,
 And she with her prey will be here anon."

She ceased her spinning while she spake ;
 And when she had answer'd him,
 Again her fingers twirl'd the thread,
 And again the Woman began,
 In low, sweet tones to sing
 The unintelligible song.

The thread she spun it gleam'd like gold
 In the light of the odorous fire,
 Yet was it so wondrously thin,
 That, save when it shone in the light,
 You might look for it closely in vain.
 The youth sate watching it,
 And she observed his wonder,
 And then again she spake,
 And still her speech was song :
 "Now twine it round thy hands I say,
 Now twine it round thy hands I pray !
 My thread is small, my thread is fine,
 But he must be
 A stronger than thee,
 Who can break this thread of mine !"

And up she raised her bright blue eyes,
 And sweetly she smiled on him,
 And he conceived no ill ;
 And round and round his right hand,
 And round and round his left,
 He wound the thread so fine.
 And then again the Woman spake,
 And still her speech was song,
 " Now thy strength, O Stranger, strain !
 Now then break the slender chain."

Thalaba strove, but the thread
 By magic hands was spun,
 And in his cheek the flush of shame
 Arose, commixt with fear.
 She beheld and laugh'd at him,
 And then again she sung,
 " My thread is small, my thread is fine,
 But he must be
 A stronger than thee,
 Who can break this thread of mine !"

And up she raised her bright blue eyes,
 And fiercely she smiled on him :
 " I thank thee, I thank thee, Hodeirah's son !
 I thank thee for doing what can't be undone
 For binding thyself in the chain I have spun !"
 Then from his head she wrench'd
 A lock of his raven hair,
 And cast it in the fire,
 And cried aloud as it burnt,
 " Sister ! Sister ! hear my voice !
 Sister ! Sister ! come and rejoice !

The thread is spun,
 The prize is won,
 The work is done,
 For I have made captive Hodeirah's Son."

V.—THALABA FULFILS HIS MISSION

IT was the early morning yet,
 When, by the well-head of a brook
 They¹ stopt, their journey done.
 The spring was clear, the water deep;
 A venturous man were he, and rash,
 That should have probed its depths,
 For all its loosen'd bed below,
 Heaved strangely up and down,
 And to and fro, from side to side,
 It heaved, and waved, and toss'd,
 And yet the depths were clear,
 And yet no ripple wrinkled o'er
 The face of that fair Well.

And on that Well, so strange and fair,
 A little boat there lay,
 Without an oar, without a sail,
 One only seat it had, one seat,
 As if for only Thalaba.
 And at the helm a Damsel stood,
 A Damsel bright and bold of eye,
 Yet did a maiden modesty
 Adorn her fearless brow;
 Her face was sorrowful, but sure
 More beautiful for sorrow.

¹ Thalaba's sledge-dogs. —ED.

To her the Dogs look'd wistful up,
 And then their tongues were loosed :
 " Have we done well, O Mistress dear !
 And shall our sufferings end ? "

The gentle Damsel made reply ;
 " Poor servants of the God I serve,
 When all this witchery is destroy'd,
 Your woes will end with mine.
 A hope, alas ! how long unknown !
 This new adventurer gives ;
 Now God forbid, that he, like you,
 Should perish for his fears !
 Poor servants of the God I serve,
 Wait ye the event in peace. "

A deep and total slumber as she spake
 Seized them. Sleep on, poor sufferers ! be at rest !
 Ye wake no more to anguish : . . ye have borne
 The Chosen, the Destroyer ! . . soon his hand
 Shall strike the efficient blow ;
 And shaking off your penal forms, shall ye,
 With songs of joy, amid the Eden groves,
 Hymn the Deliverer's praise.

Then did the Damsel say to Thalaba,
 " The morn is young, the Sun is fair,
 And pleasantly through pleasant banks
 Yon quiet stream flows on . .
 Wilt thou embark with me ?
 Thou knowest not the water's way ;
 Think, Stranger, well ! and night must come, . .
 Darest thou embark with me ?
 Through fearful perils thou must pass, . .

Stranger, the wretched ask thine aid !
 Thou wilt embark with me !"
 She smiled in tears upon the youth ; . .
 What heart were his, who could gainsay
 That melancholy smile ?
 " I will," quoth Thalaba,
 " I will, in Allah's name !"

He sate him on the single seat,
 The little boat moved on.
 Through pleasant banks the quiet stream
 Went winding pleasantly ;
 By fragrant fir-groves now it pass'd,
 And now, through alder-shores,
 Through green and fertile meadows now
 It silently ran by.
 The flag-flower blossom'd on its side,
 The willow tresses waved,
 The flowing current furrow'd round
 The water-lily's floating leaf,
 The fly of green and gauzy wing,
 Fell sporting down its course ;
 And grateful to the voyager
 The freshness that it breathed,
 And soothing to his ear
 Its murmur round the prow.
 The little boat falls rapidly
 Adown the rapid stream.

But many a silent spring meantime,
 And many a rivulet and rill
 Had swoln the growing stream ;
 And when the southern Sun began

To wind the downward way of heaven,
It ran a river deep and wide,
Through banks that widen'd still.
Then once again the Damsel spake :
"The stream is strong, the river broad,
Wilt thou go on with me ?
The day is fair, but night must come . .
Wilt thou go on with me ?
Far, far away, the sufferer's eye
For thee hath long been looking, . .
Thou wilt go on with me !"
"Sail on, sail on," quoth Thalaba,
"Sail on, in Allah's name !"
The little boat falls rapidly
Adown the river-stream.

A broader and yet broader stream,
That rock'd the little boat !
The Cormorant stands upon its shoals,
His black and dripping wings
Half open'd to the wind.
The Sun goes down, the crescent Moon
Is brightening in the firmament ;
And what is yonder roar,
That sinking now, and swelling now,
But evermore increasing,
Still louder, louder, grows ?
The little boat falls rapidly
Adown the rapid tide ;
The Moon is bright above,
And the great Ocean opens on their way.
Then did the Damsel speak again,
"Wilt thou go on with me ?

The Moon is bright, the sea is calm,
 I know the ocean-paths ;
 Wilt thou go on with me ? . .
 Deliverer ! yes ! thou dost not fear !
 Thou wilt go on with me ! "
 " Sail on, sail on ! " quoth Thalaba,
 " Sail on, in Allah's name ! "

The Moon is bright, the sea is calm,
 The little boat rides rapidly
 Across the ocean waves ;
 The line of moonlight on the deep
 Still follows as they voyage on ;
 The winds are motionless ;
 The gentle waters gently part
 In dimples round the prow.
 He looks above, he looks around,
 The boundless heaven, the boundless sea,
 The crescent moon, the little boat,
 Nought else above, below.

The Moon is sunk ; a dusky grey
 Spreads o'er the Eastern sky ;
 The stars grow pale and paler ; . .
 Oh beautiful ! the godlike Sun
 Is rising o'er the sea !
 Without an oar, without a sail,
 The little boat rides rapidly ; . .
 Is that a cloud that skirts the sea ?
 There is no cloud in heaven !
 And nearer now, and darker now . .
 It is . . it is . . the Land !
 For yonder are the rocks that rise

Dark in the reddening morn ;
 For loud around their hollow base
 The surges rage and foam.

The little boat rides rapidly,
 And pitches now with shorter toss
 Upon the narrower swell ;
 And now so near, they see
 The shelves and shadows of the cliff,
 And the low-lurking rocks,
 O'er whose black summits, hidden half,
 The shivering billows burst ; . .
 And nearer now they feel the breaker's spray.
 Then said the Damsel : " Yonder is our path
 Beneath the cavern arch.
 Now is the ebb, and till the ocean flow
 We cannot over-ride the rocks.
 Go thou, and on the shore
 Perform thy last ablutions, and with prayer
 Strengthen thy heart . . I too have need to pray."

She held the helm with steady hand
 Amid the stronger waves ;
 Through surge and surf she drove ;
 The adventurer leapt to land.

Then Thalaba drew off Abdaldar's ring,
 And cast it in the sea, and cried aloud,
 "Thou art my shield, my trust, my hope, O God !
 Behold and guard me now,
 Thou who alone canst save.
 If from my childhood up I have look'd on
 With exultation to my destiny ;

If in the hour of anguish I have own'd
 The justice of the hand that chasten'd me ;
 If of all selfish passions purified
 I go to work thy will, and from the world
 Root up the ill-doing race,
 Lord ! let not thou the weakness of my arm
 Make vain the enterprise ! "

The Sun was rising all magnificent,
 Ocean and Heaven rejoicing in his beams.
 And now had Thalaba
 Perform'd his last ablutions, and he stood
 And gazed upon the little boat
 Riding the billows near,
 Where, like a sea-bird breasting the broad waves,
 It rose and fell upon the surge,
 Till from the glitterance of the sunny main
 He turn'd his aching eyes ;
 And then upon the beach he laid him down,
 And watch'd the rising tide.
 He did not pray, he was not calm for prayer ;
 His spirit, troubled with tumultuous hope,
 Toil'd with futurity ;
 His brain, with busier workings, felt
 The roar and raving of the restless sea,
 The boundless waves that rose and roll'd and rock'd :
 The everlasting sound
 Opprest him, and the heaving infinite :
 He closed his lids for rest.

Meantime with fuller reach and stronger swell,
 Wave after wave advanced ;
 Each following billow lifted the last foam

That trembled on the sand with rainbow hues ;
 The living flower that, rooted to the rock,
 Late from the thinner element
 Shrunk down within its purple stem to sleep,
 Now feels the water, and again
 Awakening, blossoms out
 All its green anther-necks.

Was there a Spirit in the gale
 That fluttered o'er his cheek ?
 For it came on him like the new-risen sun
 Which plays and dallies o'er the night-closed flower,
 And woos it to unfold anew to joy ;
 For it came on him as the dews of eve
 Descend with healing and with life
 Upon the summer mead ;
 Or liker the first sound of seraph song
 And Angel greeting, to the soul
 Whose latest sense had shudder'd at the groan
 Of anguish, kneeling by a death-bed side.

He starts, and gazes round to seek
 The certain presence. "Thalaba !" exclaim'd
 The Voice of the Unseen ; . . .
 "Father of my Oneiza !" he replied,
 "And have thy years been number'd ? art thou too
 Among the Angels ?" . . . "Thalaba !"
 A second and a dearer voice repeats,
 "Go in the favour of the Lord,
 My Thalaba, go on !
 My husband, I have drest our bower of bliss.
 Go, and perform the work ;
 Let me not longer suffer hope in Heaven !"

He turn'd an eager glance toward the sea.
 "Come!" quoth the Damsel, and she drove
 Her little boat to land.
 Impatient through the rising wave,
 He rush'd to meet its way,
 His eye was bright, his cheek was flush'd with joy.
 "Hast thou had comfort in thy prayers?" she ask'd.
 "Yea," Thalaba replied,
 "A heavenly visitation." "God be praised!"
 She answer'd, "then I do not hope in vain!"
 And her voice trembled, and her lip
 Quiver'd, and tears ran down.

"Stranger," said she, "in years long past
 Was one who vow'd himself
 The Champion of the Lord, like thee,
 Against the race of Hell.
 Young was he, as thyself,
 Gentle, and yet so brave!
 A lion-hearted man.
 Shame on me, Stranger! in the arms of love
 I held him from his calling, till the hour
 Was past; and then the Angel who should else
 Have crown'd him with his glory-wreath,
 Smote him in anger . . . Years and years are gone . .
 And in his place of penance he awaits
 Thee, the Deliverer, . . surely thou art he!
 It was my righteous punishment,
 In the same youth unchanged,
 And love unchangeable,
 Sorrow for ever fresh,
 And bitter penitence,
 That gives no respite night nor day from grief,

To abide the written hour, when I should waft
 The doom'd Destroyer and Deliverer here.
 Remember thou, that thy success affects
 No single fate, no ordinary woes."

As thus she spake, the entrance of the cave
 Darken'd the boat below.
 Around them from their nests,
 The screaming sea-birds fled,
 Wondering at that strange shape,
 Yet unalarm'd at sight of living man,
 Unknowing of his sway and power misused :
 The clamours of their young
 Echoed in shriller cries,
 Which rung in wild discordance round the rock.
 And farther as they now advanced,
 The dim reflection of the darken'd day
 Grew fainter, and the dash
 Of the out-breakers deaden'd ; farther yet,
 And yet more faint the gleam,
 And there the waters, at their utmost bound,
 Silently rippled on the rising rock.
 They landed and advanced, and deeper in,
 Two adamantine doors
 Closed up the cavern pass.

Reclining on the rock beside,
 Sate a grey-headed man,
 Watching an hour-glass by.
 To him the Damsel spake,
 " Is it the hour appointed ? " The Old Man
 Nor answer'd her awhile,
 Nor lifted he his downward eye,

For now the glass ran low,
 And, like the days of age,
 With speed perceivable,
 The latter sands descend ;
 And now the last are gone.
 Then he look'd up, and raised his hand, and smote
 The adamantine gates.

The gates of adamant
 Unfolding at the stroke,
 Open'd and gave the entrance. Then she turn'd
 To Thalaba and said,
 "Go, in the name of God !
 I cannot enter, . . I must wait the end
 In hope and agony.
 God and Mahommed prosper thee,
 For thy sake and for ours !"

He tarried not, . . he pass'd
 The threshold, over which was no return.
 All earthly thoughts, all human hopes
 And passions now put off,
 He cast no backward glance
 Toward the gleam of day.
 There was a light within,
 A yellow light, as when the autumnal Sun,
 Through travelling rain and mist
 Shines on the evening hills :
 Whether, from central fires effused,
 Or that the sun-beams, day by day,
 From earliest generations, there absorb'd,
 Were gathering for the wrath-flame. Shade was none
 In those portentous vaults ;

Crag overhanging, nor columnal rock
 Cast its dark outline there ;
 For with the hot and heavy atmosphere
 The light incorporate, permeating all,
 Spread over all its equal yellowness.
 There was no motion in the lifeless air ;
 He felt no stirring as he pass'd
 Adown the long descent ;
 He heard not his own footsteps on the rock
 That through the thick stagnation sent no sound.
 How sweet it were, he thought,
 To feel the flowing wind !
 With what a thirst of joy
 He should breathe in the open gales of heaven !

Downward, and downward still, and still the way,
 The lengthening way is safe.
 Is there no secret wile,
 No lurking enemy ?
 His watchful eye is on the wall of rock, . .
 And warily he marks the roof,
 And warily surveys
 The path that lies before.
 Downward, and downward still, and still the way,
 The long, long way is safe ;
 Rock only, the same light,
 The same dead atmosphere,
 And solitude, and silence like the grave.

At length the long descent
 Ends on a precipice ;
 No feeble ray enter'd its dreadful gulph ;
 For in the pit profound,

Black Darkness, utter Night,
 Repell'd the hostile gleam,
 And o'er the surface the light atmosphere
 Floated, and mingled not.
 Above the depth, four over-awning wings,
 Unplumed and huge and strong,
 Bore up a little car ;
 Four living pinions, headless, bodiless,
 Sprung from one stem that branch'd below
 In four down-arching limbs,
 And clench'd the car-rings endlong and athwart
 With claws of griffin grasp.

But not on these, the depth so terrible,
 The wondrous wings, fix'd Thalaba his eye ;
 For there, upon the brink,
 With fiery fetters fasten'd to the rock,
 A man, a living man, tormented lay,
 The young Othatha ; in the arms of love
 He who had linger'd out the auspicious hour,
 Forgetful of his call.

In shuddering pity, Thalaba exclaim'd,
 " Servant of God, can I not succour thee ? "
 He groan'd, and answered, " Son of Man,
 sinn'd, and am tormented ; I endure
 In patience and in hope.
 The hour that shall destroy the Race of Hell,
 That hour shall set me free."

" Is it not come ? " quoth Thalaba,
 " Yea ! by this omen ! " . . and with fearless hand
 He grasp'd the burning fetters, " in the name
 Of God ! " . . and from the rock

Rooted the rivets, and adown the gulph
Dropt them. The rush of flames roar'd up,

For they had kindled in their fall
The deadly vapours of the pit profound;
And Thalaba bent on and look'd below.

But vainly he explored
The deep abyss of flame,
That sunk beyond the plunge of mortal eye,
Now all ablaze, as if infernal fires
Illumed the world beneath.

Soon was the poison-fuel spent,
The flame grew pale and dim,
And dimmer now it fades, and now is quench'd,
And all again is dark,
Save where the yellow air
Enters a little in and mingles slow.

Meantime, the freed Othatha claspt his knees,
And cried, "Deliverer!" struggling then
With joyful hope, "and where is she," he cried,
"Whose promised coming for so many a year . . ."

"Go!" answered Thalaba,

"She waits thee at the gates."

"And in thy triumph," he replied,
"There thou wilt join us?" . . The Deliverer's eye
Glanced on the abyss, way else was none . .

The depth was unascendable.

"Await not me," he cried,
"My path hath been appointed! go . . embark!
Return to life, . . live happy!"

OTHATHA

But thy name? . .

That through the nations we may blazon it, . .
That we may bless thee !

THALABA

Bless the Merciful !

Then Thalaba pronounced the name of God,
And leapt into the car.
Down, down, it sunk, . . down, down, . .
He neither breathes nor sees ;
His eyes are closed for giddiness,
His breath is sinking with the fall.
The air that yields beneath the car,
Inflates the wings above.
Down . . down . . a measureless depth! . . down . . down,
Was then the Simorg with the Powers of ill
Associate to destroy ?
And was that lovely Mariner
A fiend as false as fair ?
For still the car sinks down ;
But ever the uprushing wind
Inflates the wings above,
And still the struggling wings
Repel the rushing wind.
Down . . down . . and now it strikes.

He stands and totters giddily,
All objects round awhile
Float dizzy on his sight ;
Collected soon, he gazes for the way.
There was a distant light that led his search ;
The torch a broader blaze,
The unpruned taper flares a longer flame,

But this was strong as is the noontide sun,
So, in the glory of its rays intense,
It quiver'd with green glow.
Beyond was all unseen,
No eye could penetrate
That unendurable excess of light.

It veil'd no friendly form, thought Thalaba :
And wisely did he deem,
For at the threshold of the rocky door,
Hugest and fiercest of his kind accurst,
Fit warden of the sorcery-gate,
A rebel Afreet lay ;
He scented the approach of human food,
And hungry hope kindled his eye of fire.
Raising his hand to screen the dazzled sense,
Onward held Thalaba,
And lifted still at times a rapid glance ;
Till the due distance gain'd,
With head abased, he laid
An arrow in its rest.
With steady effort and knit forehead then,
Full on the painful light
He fix'd his aching eye, and loosed the bow.

A hideous yell ensued ;
And sure no human voice had scope or power
For that prodigious shriek
Whose pealing echoes thundered up the rock.
Dim grew the dying light ;
But Thalaba leapt onward to the doors
Now visible beyond,
And while the Afreet warden of the way

Was writhing with his death-pangs, over him
 Sprung and smote the stony doors,
 And bade them, in the name of God, give way !

The dying Fiend beneath him, at that name
 Tost in worse agony,
 And the rocks shudder'd, and the rocky doors
 Rent at the voice asunder. Lo ! within . .
 The Teraph and the Fire,
 And Khawla, and in mail complete
 Mohareb for the strife.
 But Thalaba, with numbing force,
 Smites his raised arm, and rushes by ;
 For now he sees the fire, amid whose flames,
 On the white ashes of Hodeirah, lies
 Hodeirah's holy sword.

He rushes to the Fire :
 Then Khawla met the youth,
 And leapt upon him, and with clinging arms
 Clasps him, and calls Mohareb now to aim
 The effectual vengeance. O fool ! fool ! he sees
 His Father's Sword, and who shall bar his way ?
 Who stand against the fury of that arm
 That spurns her to the ground ? . .
 She rises half, she twists around his knees, . .
 A moment . . and he vainly strives
 To shake her from her hold ;
 Impatient then he seized her leathery neck
 With throttling grasp, and as she loosed her hold,
 Thrust her aside, and unimpeded now
 Springs forward to the Sword.

The co-existent Flame
 Knew the Destroyer ; it encircled him,
 Roll'd up his robe, and gather'd round his head :
 Condensing to intenser splendour there,
 His Crown of Glory and his Light of Life,
 Hover'd the irradiate wreath.

The instant Thalaba had laid his hand
 Upon his Father's Sword,
 The Living Image in the inner cave
 Smote the Round Altar. The Domdaniel rock'd
 Through all its thundering vaults ;
 Over the Surface of the reeling Earth,
 The alarum shock was felt ;
 The Sorcerer brood, all, all, where'er dispersed,
 Perforce obey'd the summons ; all, . . they came
 Compell'd by Hell and Heaven ;
 By Hell compell'd to keep
 Their baptism-covenant,
 And with the union of their strength
 Oppose the common danger ; forced by Heaven
 To share the common doom.

Vain are all spells ! the Destroyer
 Treads the Domdaniel floor.
 They crowd with human arms and human force
 To crush the single foe.
 Vain is all human force !
 He wields his Father's Sword,
 The vengeance of awaken'd Deity.
 But chief on Thalaba Mohareb prest ;
 The Witch in her oracular speech
 Announced one fatal blow for both,

And, desperate of self-safety, yet he hoped
 To serve the cause of Eblis, and uphold
 His empire, true in death.

Who shall withstand the Destroyer ?
 Scatter'd before the sword of Thalaba
 The Sorcerer throng recede,
 And leave him space for combat. Wretched man, .
 What shall the helmet or the shield avail
 Against Almighty anger ? . . wretched man,
 Too late Mohareb finds that he hath chosen
 The evil part ! . . He rears his shield
 To meet the Arabian's sword, . .
 Under the edge of that fire-hardened steel,
 The shield falls sever'd ; his cold arm
 Rings with the jarring blow : . .
 He lifts his scymetar ;
 A second stroke, and lo ! the broken hilt
 Hangs from his palsied hand :
 And now he bleeds, and now he flies,
 And fain would hide himself amid the troop ;
 But they feel the sword of Hodeirah,
 But they also fly from the ruin,
 And hasten to the inner cave,
 And fall all fearfully
 Around the Giant Idol's feet,
 Seeking protection from the Power they served.

It was a Living Image, by the art
 Of magic hands, of flesh and bones composed,
 And human blood, through veins and arteries
 That flow'd with vital action. In the shape
 Of Eblis it was made ;

Its stature such, and such its strength,
 As when among the sons of God
 Pre-eminent he raised his radiant head,
 Prince of the Morning. On his brow
 A coronet of meteor flames,
 Flowing in points of light.
 Self-poised in air before him
 Hung the Round Altar, rolling like the World
 On its diurnal axis, like the World
 Chequer'd with sea and shore,
 The work of Demon art.
 For where the sceptre in the Idol's hand
 Touch'd the Round Altar, in its answering realm,
 Earth felt the stroke, and Ocean rose in storms,
 And shatter'd Cities, shaken from their seat,
 Crush'd all their habitants.
 His other arm was raised, and its spread palm
 Sustain'd the ocean-weight,
 Whose naked waters arch'd the sanctuary ;
 Sole prop and pillar he.

Fallen on the ground, around his feet,
 The Sorcerers lay. Mohareb's quivering arms
 Clung to the Idol's knees ;
 The Idol's face was pale,
 And calm in terror he beheld
 The approach of the Destroyer.

Sure of his stroke, and therefore in pursuit
 Following, nor blind, nor hasty, on his foe,
 Moved the Destroyer. Okba met his way,
 Of all that brotherhood
 He only fearless, miserable man,

The one that had no hope.¹

"On me, on me," the childless Sorcerer cried,
 "Let fall the weapon ! I am he who stole
 Upon the midnight of thy Father's tent ;
 This is the hand that pierced Hodeirah's heart,
 That felt thy brethren's and thy sisters' blood
 Gush round the dagger-hilt. Let fall on me
 The fated sword ! the vengeance-hour is come !
 Destroyer, do thy work !"

Nor wile, nor weapon, had the desperate wretch ;
 He spread his bosom to the stroke.

"Old Man, I strike thee not !" said Thalaba ;
 "The evil thou hast done to me and mine
 Brought its own bitter punishment.

For thy dear Daughter's sake I pardon thee,
 As I do hope Heaven's pardon . . . For her sake
 Repent while time is yet ! . . thou hast my prayers
 To aid thee ; thou poor sinner, cast thyself
 Upon the goodness of offended God !
 I speak in Laila's name ; and what if now
 Thou canst not think to join in Paradise
 Her spotless Spirit, . . hath not Allah made
 Al-Araf, in his wisdom ? where the sight
 Of Heaven may kindle in the penitent
 The strong and purifying fire of hope,
 Till, at the Day of Judgement, he shall see
 The Mercy-Gates unfold."

The astonish'd man stood gazing as he spake,
 At length his heart was soften'd, and the tears

¹ Laila, daughter of the sorcerer Okba, had died by her father's dagger to save the life of Thalaba. —ED.

Gush'd, and he sobb'd aloud.
 Then suddenly was heard
 The all-beholding Prophet's voice divine,
 "Thou hast done well, my Servant !
 Ask and receive thy reward !"

A deep and awful joy
 Seem'd to dilate the heart of Thalaba ;
 With arms in reverence cross'd upon his breast,
 Upseeking eyes suffused with tears devout,
 He answered to the Voice, " Prophet of God,
 Holy, and good, and bountiful !
 One only earthly wish have I, to work
 Thy will ; and thy protection grants me that.
 Look on this Sorcerer ! heavy are his crimes,
 But infinite is mercy ! if thy servant
 Have now found favour in the sight of God,
 Let him be touch'd with penitence, and save
 His soul from utter death."

" The groans of penitence," replied the Voice,
 " Never arise unheard !
 But, for thyself, prefer the prayer ;
 The Treasure-house of Heaven
 Is open to thy will."

" Prophet of God ! " then answered Thalaba,
 " I am alone on earth ;
 Thou knowest the secret wishes of my heart !
 Do with me as thou wilt ! thy will is best."

There issued forth no Voice to answer him ;
 But, lo ! Hodeirah's Spirit comes to see

His vengeance, and beside him, a pure form
 Of roseate light, his Angel mother hung.
 "My Child, my dear, my glorious . . blessed . . Child,
 My promise is perform'd . . fulfil thy work !"

Thalaba knew that his death-hour was come ;
 And on he leapt, and springing up,
 Into the Idol's heart
 Hilt deep he plunged the Sword.
 The Ocean-vault fell in, and all were crush'd.
 In the same moment, at the gate
 Of Paradise, Oneiza's Houri form
 Welcomed her Husband to eternal bliss.

From "The Curse of Behama"

I.—THE FUNERAL

MIDNIGHT, and yet no eye
Through all the Imperial City closed in sleep !
Behold her streets a-blaze
With light that seems to kindle the red sky,
Her myriads swarming through the crowded ways !
Master and slave, old age and infancy,
All, all abroad to gaze ;
House-top and balcony
Clustered with women, who throw back their veils
With unimpeded and insatiate sight
To view the funeral pomp which passes by,
As if the mournful rite
Were but to them a scene of joyance and delight.

Vainly, ye blessed twinklers of the night,
Your feeble beams ye shed,
Quench'd in the unnatural light which might out-stare
Even the broad eye of day ;
And thou from thy celestial way
Pourest, O Moon, an ineffectual ray !

For lo ! ten thousand torches flame and flare
 Upon the midnight air,
 Blotting the lights of heaven
 With one portentous glare.
 Behold the fragrant smoke in many a fold
 Ascending, floats along the fiery sky,
 And hangeth visible on high,
 A dark and waving canopy.

Hark ! 'tis the funeral trumpet's breath !
 'Tis the dirge of death !
 At once ten thousand drums begin,
 With one long thunder-peal the ear assailing ;
 Ten thousand voices then join in,
 And with one deep and general din
 Pour their wild wailing.
 The song of praise is drown'd
 Amid the deafening sound ;
 You hear no more the trumpet's tone,
 You hear no more the mourner's moan,
 Though the trumpet's breath, and the dirge of death,
 Swell with commingled force the funeral yell.
 But rising over all in one acclaim
 Is heard the echoed and re-echoed name,
 From all that countless rout ;
 Arvalan ! Arvalan !
 Arvalan ! Arvalan !
 Ten times ten thousand voices in one shout
 Call Arvalan ! The overpowering sound,
 From house to house repeated rings about,
 From tower to tower rolls round.

The death-procession moves along ;
 Their bald heads shining to the torches' ray,

The Bramins lead the way,
 Chaunting the funeral song.
 And now at once they shout,
 Arvalan ! Arvalan !
 With quick rebound of sound,
 All in accordance cry,
 Arvalan ! Arvalan !
 The universal multitude reply.
 In vain ye thunder on his ear the name ;
 Would ye awake the dead ?
 Borne upright in his palankeen,
 There Arvalan is seen !
 A glow is on his face, . . . a lively red ;
 It is the crimson canopy
 Which o'er his cheek a reddening shade hath shed ;
 He moves, . . . he nods his head, . . .
 But the motion comes from the bearers' tread,
 As the body, borne aloft in state,
 Sways with the impulse of its own dead weight.

Close following his dead son, Kehama came,
 Nor joining in the ritual song,
 Nor calling the dear name ;
 With head deprest and funeral vest,
 And arms enfolded on his breast,
 Silent and lost in thought he moves along.
 King of the World, his slaves, unenvying now,
 Behold their wretched Lord ; rejoiced they see
 The mighty Rajah's misery ;
 That Nature in his pride hath dealt the blow,
 And taught the Master of Mankind to know
 Even he himself is man, and not exempt from woe.

O sight of grief ! the wives of Arvalan,
 Young Azla, young Nealliny, are seen !
 Their widow-robcs of white,
 With gold and jewels bright,
 Each like an Eastern queen.
 Woe ! woe ! around their palankeen,
 As on a bridal day,
 With symphony, and dance, and song,
 Their kindred and their friends come on.
 The dance of sacrifice ! the funeral song !
 And next the victim slaves in long array,
 Richly bedight to grace the fatal day,
 Move onward to their death ;
 The clarions' stirring breath
 Lifts their thin robes in every flowing fold,
 And swells the woven gold,
 That on the agitated air
 Flutters and glitters to the torch's glare.

A man and maid of aspect wan and wild,
 Then, side by side, by bowmen guarded, came ;
 O wretched father ! O unhappy child !
 Them were all eyes of all the throng exploring . . .
 Is this the daring man
 Who raised his fatal hand at Arvalan ?
 Is this the wretch condemn'd to feel
 Kehama's dreadful wrath ?
 Then were all hearts of all the throng deploring ;
 For not in that innumerable throng
 Was one who loved the dead ; for who could know
 What aggravated wrong
 Provoked the desperate blow !

Far, far behind, beyond all reach of sight,
 In order'd files the torches flow along,
 One ever-lengthening line of gliding light :
 Far . . . far behind,
 Rolls on the undistinguishable clamour,
 Of horn, and trump, and tambour ;
 Incessant as the roar
 Of streams which down the wintry mountain pour,
 And louder than the dread commotion
 Of breakers on a rocky shore,
 When the winds rage over the waves,
 And Ocean to the Tempest raves.

 And now toward the bank they go,
 Where winding on their way below,
 Deep and strong the waters flow.
 Here doth the funeral pile appear
 With myrrh and ambergris bestrew'd,
 And built of precious sandal wood.
 They cease their music and their outcry here,
 Gently they rest the bier ;
 They wet the face of Arvalan,
 No sign of life the sprinkled drops excite ;
 They feel his breast, . . . no motion there ;
 They feel his lips, . . . no breath ;
 For not with feeble, nor with erring hand,
 The brave avenger dealt the blow of death.
 Then with a doubling peal and deeper blast,
 The tambours and the trumpets sound on high,
 And with a last and loudest cry
 They call on Arvalan.

 Woe ! woe ! for Azla takes her seat
 Upon the funeral pile !

Calmly she took her seat,
 Calmly the whole terrific pomp survey'd ;
 As on her lap the while
 The lifeless head of Arvalan was laid.

Woe ! woe ! Nealliny,
 The young Nealliny !
 They strip her ornaments away,
 Bracelet and anklet, ring, and chain, and zone ;
 Around her neck they leave
 The marriage knot alone, . . .
 That marriage band, which when
 Yon waning moon was young,
 Around her virgin neck
 With bridal joy was hung.
 Then with white flowers, the coronal of death,
 Her jetty locks they crown.

O sight of misery !
 You cannot hear her cries, . . . their sound
 In that wild dissonance is drown'd ; . . .
 But in her face you see
 The supplication and the agony, . . .
 See in her swelling throat the desperate strength
 That with vain effort struggles yet for life ;
 Her arms contracted now in fruitless strife,
 Now wildly at full length
 Towards the crowd in vain for pity spread, . . .
 They force her on, they bind her to the dead.

Then all around retire ;
 Circling the pile, the ministering Bramins stand,
 Each lifting in his hand a torch on fire.

Alone the Father of the dead advanced
And lit the funeral pyre.

At once on every side
The circling torches drop,
At once on every side
The fragrant oil is pour'd,
At once on every side
The rapid flames rush up.

Then hand in hand the victim band
Roll in the dance around the funeral pyre ;
Their garments' flying folds
Float inward to the fire ;

In drunken whirl they wheel around ;
One drops, . . . another plunges in ;
And still with overwhelming din
The tambours and the trumpets sound ;
And clap of hand, and shouts, and cries,
From all the multitude arise ;

While round and round, in giddy wheel,
Intoxicate they roll and reel,
Till one by one whirl'd in they fall,
And the devouring flames have swallow'd all.

Then all was still ; the drums and clarions ceased ;
The multitude were hush'd in silent awe ;
Only the roaring of the flames was heard.

II.—KEHAMA CURSES LADURLAD

I CHARM thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,

From the serpent's tooth,
 And the beasts of blood :
 From Sickness I charm thee,
 And Time shall not harm thee ;
 But Earth which is mine,
 Its fruits shall deny thee ;
 And Water shall hear me,
 And know thee and fly thee ;
 And the Winds shall not touch thee
 When they pass by thee,
 And the Dews shall not wet thee,
 When they fall nigh thee :
 And thou shalt seek Death
 To release thee, in vain ;
 Thou shalt live in thy pain
 While Kehama shall reign,
 With a fire in thy heart,
 And a fire in thy brain ;
 And Sleep shall obey me,
 And visit thee never,
 And the Curse shall be on thee
 For ever and ever.

There where the Curse had stricken him,
 There stood the miserable man,
 There stood Ladurlad, with loose-hanging arms,
 And eyes of idiot wandering.
 Was it a dream ? alas,
 He heard the river flow,
 He heard the crumbling of the pile,
 He heard the wind which shower'd
 The thin white ashes round.
 There motionless he stood,

As if he hoped it were a dream,
 And feared to move, lest he should prove
 The actual misery ;
 And still at times he met Kehama's eye,
 Kehama's eye that fastened on him still.

III.—LADURLAD RESCUES HIS DAUGHTER KAILYAL¹

WHERE too is she whom most his heart held dear,
 His best-beloved Kailyal, where is she,
 The solace and the joy of many a year
 Of widowhood ? is she then gone,
 And is he left all-utterly alone,
 To bear his blasting curse, and none
 To succour or deplore him ?
 He staggers from the dreadful spot ; the throng
 Give way in fear before him ;
 Like one who carries pestilence about,
 Shuddering they shun him, where he moves along.
 And now he wanders on
 Beyond the noisy rout ;
 He cannot fly and leave his Curse behind,
 Yet doth he seem to find
 A comfort in the change of circumstance.
 Adown the shore he strays,
 Unknowing where his wretched feet shall rest,
 But farthest from the fatal place is best.

By this in the orient sky appears the gleam
 Of day. Lo ! what is yonder in the stream,

¹ Kailyal, clinging to the wooden image of Marriataly, the goddess of the Parias, is borne down the river.—ED.

Down the slow river floating slow,
 In distance indistinct and dimly seen ?
 The childless one with idle eye
 Followed its motion thoughtlessly ;
 Idly he gazed unknowing why,
 And half unconscious that he watch'd its way.
 Belike it is a tree
 Which some rude tempest, in its sudden sway,
 Tore from the rock, or from the hollow shore
 The undermining stream hath swept away.

But when anon outswelling by its side,
 A woman's robe he spied,
 Oh then Ladurlad started,
 As one, who in his grave
 Had heard an Angel's call.
 Yea, Marriatally, thou hast deign'd to save !
 Yea, Goddess ! it is she,
 Kailyal, still clinging senselessly
 To thy dear Image, and in happy hour
 Upborne amid the wave
 By that preserving power.

Headlong in hope and in joy
 Ladurlad plunged in the water ;
 The Water knew Kehama's spell,
 The Water shrunk before him.
 Blind to the miracle,
 He rushes to his daughter,
 And treads the river-depths in transport wild,
 And clasps and saves his child.

IV.—THE CURSE PROVED OF POWER

RECLINED beneath a Cocoa's feathery shade
Ladurlad lies,
And Kailyal on his lap her head hath laid,
To hide her streaming eyes.
The boatman, sailing on his easy way,
With envious eye beheld them where they lay ;
For every herb and flower
Was fresh and fragrant with the early dew,
Sweet sung the birds in that delicious hour,
And the cool gale of morning as it blew,
Not yet subdued by day's increasing power,
Ruffling the surface of the silvery stream,
Swept o'er the moisten'd sand, and rais'd no shower.
Telling their tale of love,
The boatman thought they lay
At that lone hour, and who so blest as they !

But now the Sun in heaven is high,
The little songsters of the sky
Sit silent in the sultry hour,
They pant and palpitate with heat ;
Their bills are open languidly
To catch the passing air ;
They hear it not, they feel it not,
It murmurs not, it moves not.
The boatman, as he looks to land,
Admires what men so mad to linger there,
For yonder Cocoa's shade behind them falls,
A single spot upon the burning sand.

There all the morning was Ladurlad laid,
 Silent and motionless like one at ease ;
 There motionless upon her father's knees
 Reclined the silent maid.
 The man was still, pondering with steady mind,
 As if it were another's Curse,
 His own portentous lot ;
 Scanning it o'er and o'er in busy thought,
 As though it were a last night's tale of woe,
 Before the cottage door
 By some old beldam sung,
 While young and old, assembled round
 Listened, as if by witchery bound,
 In fearful pleasure to her wondrous tongue.

Musing so long he lay, that all things seem
 Unreal to his sense, even like a dream,
 A monstrous dream of things which could not be.
 That beating, burning brow, . . . why it was now
 The height of noon, and he was lying there
 In the broad sun, all bare !
 What if he felt no wind ? the air was still.
 That was the general will
 Of Nature, not his own peculiar doom ;
 Yon rows of rice erect and silent stand,
 The shadow of the Cocoa's lightest plume
 Is steady on the sand.

Is it indeed a dream ? he rose to try,
 Impatient to the water side he went,
 And down he bent,
 And in the stream he plunged his hasty arm
 To break the visionary charm.

With fearful eye and fearful heart,
 His daughter watch'd the event ;
 She saw the start and shudder,
 She heard the in-drawn groan,
 For the Water knew Kehama's charm,
 The Water shrunk before his arm,
 His dry hand moved about unmoisten'd there ;
 As easily might that dry hand avail
 To stop the passing gale,
 Or grasp the impassive air.
 He is Almighty then !
 Exclaim'd the wretched man in his despair :
 Air knows him, Water knows him ; Sleep
 His dreadful word will keep ;
 Even in the grave there is no rest for me,
 Cut off from that last hope, . . . the wretch's joy ;
 And Veeshnoo hath no power to save,
 Nor Seeva to destroy.

V.—EREENIA, THE GLENDOVEER, BEARS THE
 MAIDEN KAILYAL TO THE SWERGA ¹

THEN in the Ship of Heaven, Ereenia laid
 The waking, wondering Maid ;
 The Ship of Heaven, instinct with thought, display'd
 Its living sail, and glides along the sky.
 On either side in wavy tide,
 The clouds of morn along its path divide ;
 The Winds who swept in wild career on high,
 Before its presence check their charmed force ;
 The Winds that loitering lagg'd along their course,

¹ The Glendoveers are winged spirits, the celestial children of Casyapa. —ED.

Around the living Bark enamour'd play,
Swell underneath the sail, and sing before its way.

That Bark, in shape, was like the furrow'd shell
Wherein the Sea-Nymphs to their parent-King,
On festal day, their duteous offerings bring.
Its hue? . . . Go watch the last green light
Ere Evening yields the western sky to Night ;
Or fix upon the Sun thy strenuous sight
Till thou hast reach'd its orb of chrysolite.
The sail from end to end display'd
Bent, like a rainbow, o'er the Maid.
An Angel's head, with visual eye,
Through trackless space, directs its chosen way ;
Nor aid of wing, nor foot, nor fin,
Requires to voyage o'er the obedient sky.
Smooth as the swan when not a breeze at even
Disturbs the surface of the silver stream,
Through air and sunshine sails the Ship of Heaven.

Recumbent there the Maiden glides along
On her aerial way,
How swift she feels not, though the swiftest wind
Had flagg'd in flight behind.
Motionless as a sleeping babe she lay,
And all serene in mind,
Feeling no fear ; for that ethereal air
With such new life and joyance fill'd her heart,
Fear could not enter there ;
For sure she deem'd her mortal part was o'er,
And she was sailing to the heavenly shore ;
And that angelic form, who moved beside,
Was some good Spirit sent to be her guide.

Daughter of Earth ! therein thou deem'st aright ;
 And never yet did form more beautiful,
 In dreams of night descending from on high,
 Bless the religious Virgin's gifted sight,
 Nor like a vision of delight,
 Rise on the raptured Poet's inward eye.
 Of human form divine was he,
 The immortal Youth of Heaven who floated by,
 Even such as that divinest form shall be
 In those blest stages of our onward race,
 When no infirmity,
 Low thought, nor base desire, nor wasting care,
 Deface the semblance of our heavenly sire.

The wings of Eagle or of Cherubim
 Had seem'd unworthy him ;
 Angelic power and dignity and grace
 Were in his glorious pennons ; from the neck
 Down to the ankle reach'd their swelling web
 Richer than robes of Tyrian dye, that deck
 Imperial Majesty :
 Their colour like the winter's moonless sky,
 When all the stars of midnight's canopy
 Shine forth ; or like the azure deep at noon,
 Reflecting back to heaven a brighter blue.
 Such was their tint when closed, but when outspread,
 The permeating light
 Shed through their substance thin a varying hue ;
 Now bright as when the rose,
 Beauteous as fragrant, gives to scent and sight
 A like delight ; now like the juice that flows
 From Douro's generous vine ;
 Or ruby when with deepest red it glows ;

Or as the morning clouds refulgent shine,
 When, at forthcoming of the Lord of Day,
 The Orient, like a shrine,
 Kindles as it receives the rising ray,
 And heralding his way,
 Proclaims the presence of the Power divine.

Thus glorious were the wings
 Of that celestial Spirit, as he went
 Disporting through his native element.
 Nor these alone

The gorgeous beauties that they gave to view ;
 Through the broad membrane branched a pliant bone,
 Spreading like fibres from their parent stem,
 Its veins like interwoven silver shone,
 Or as the chaster hue
 Of pearls that grace some Sultan's diadem.
 Now with slow stroke and strong behold him smite
 The buoyant air, and now in gentler flight,
 On motionless wing expanded, shoot along.

Through air and sunshine sails the Ship of Heaven ;
 Far, far beneath them lies
 The gross and heavy atmosphere of earth ;
 And with the Swerga gales,
 The Maid of mortal birth
 At every breath a new delight inhales.
 And now toward its port the Ship of Heaven,
 Swift as a falling meteor, shapes its flight,
 Yet gently as the dews of night that gem,
 And do not bend the hare-bell's slenderest stem.
 Daughter of Earth, Ereenia cried, alight ;
 This is thy place of rest, the Swerga this,
 Lo, here my Bower of bliss !

He furl'd his azure wings, which round him fold
 Graceful as robes of Grecian chief of old.
 The happy Kailyal knew not where to gaze ;
 Her eyes around in joyful wonder roam,
 Now turn'd upon the lovely Glendoveer,
 Now on his heavenly home.

Then to the Garden of the Deity
 Ereenia led the Maid.
 In the mid garden tower'd a giant Tree ;
 Rock-rooted on a mountain-top, it grew,
 Rear'd its unrivall'd head on high,
 And stretch'd a thousand branches o'er the sky,
 Drinking with all its leaves celestial dew.
 Lo ! where from thence as from a living well
 A thousand torrents flow !
 For still in one perpetual shower,
 Like diamond drops, ethereal waters fell
 From every leaf of all its ample bower.
 Rolling adown the steep
 From that aërial height,
 Through the deep shade of aromatic trees,
 Half-seen, the cataracts shoot their gleams of light,
 And pour upon the breeze
 Their thousand voices ; far away the roar,
 In modulations of delightful sound,
 Half-heard and ever varying, floats around.
 Below, an ample Lake expanded lies,
 Blue as the o'er-arching skies :
 Forth issuing from that lovely Lake
 A thousand rivers water Paradise.
 Full to the brink, yet never overflowing,
 They cool the amorous gales, which, ever blowing,

O'er their melodious surface love to stray ;
 Then winging back their way,
 Their vapours to the parent Tree repay ;
 And ending thus where they began,
 And feeding thus the source from whence they came,
 The eternal rivers of the Swerga ran,
 For ever renovate, yet still the same.

On that ethereal lake, whose waters lie
 Blue and transpicuous, like another sky,
 The Elements had rear'd their King's abode ;
 A strong controlling power their strife suspended
 And there their hostile essences they blended,
 To form a Palace worthy of the God.
 Built on the Lake the waters were its floor ;
 And here its walls were water arch'd with fire,
 And here were fire with water vaulted o'er ;
 And spires and pinnacles of fire
 Round watery cupolas aspire,
 And domes of rainbow rest on fiery towers ;
 And roofs of flame are turreted around
 With cloud, and shafts of cloud with flame are bound.
 Here too the Elements for ever veer,
 Ranging around with endless interchanging ;
 Pursued in love, and so in love pursuing,
 In endless revolutions here they roll ;
 For ever their mysterious work renewing ;
 The parts all shifting, still unchanged the whole.
 Even we on earth at intervals descry
 Gleams of the glory, streaks of flowing light,
 Openings of heaven, and streams that flash at night
 In fitful splendour, through the northern sky.

VI.—THE RETREAT

'Twas a fair scene wherein they stood,
A green and sunny glade amid the wood,
And in the midst an aged Banian grew.
It was a goodly sight to see
That venerable tree,
For o'er the lawn, irregularly spread,
Fifty straight columns propt its lofty head ;
And many a long depending shoot,
Seeking to strike its root,
Straight like a plummet, grew towards the ground.
Some on the lower boughs which crost their way,
Fixing their bearded fibres, round and round,
With many a ring and wild contortion wound ;
Some to the passing wind at times, with sway
Of gentle motion swung ;
Others of younger growth, unmoved, were hung
Like stone-drops from the cavern's fretted height ;
Beneath was smooth and fair to sight,
Nor weeds nor briars deform'd the natural floor,
And through the leafy cope which bower'd it o'er
Came gleams of chequer'd light.
So like a temple did it seem, that there
A pious heart's first impulse would be prayer.

A brook, with easy current, murmur'd near ;
Water so cool and clear
The peasants drink not from the humble well,
Which they with sacrifice of rural pride,
Have wedded to the cocoa-grove beside ;
Nor tanks, of costliest masonry dispense

To those in towns who dwell,
 The work of Kings, in their beneficence.
 Fed by perpetual springs, a small lagoon,
 Pellucid deep and still, in silence join'd
 And swell'd the passing stream. Like burnish'd steel
 Glowing, it lay beneath the eye of noon ;
 And when the breezes in their play,
 Ruffled the darkening surface, then with gleam
 Of sudden light, around the lotus stem
 It rippled, and the sacred flowers that crown
 The lakelet with their roseate beauty, ride
 In easy waving rock'd, from side to side ;
 And as the wind upheaves
 Their broad and buoyant weight, the glossy leaves
 Flap on the twinkling waters, up and down.

They built them here a bower, of jointed cane,
 Strong for the needful use, and light and long
 Was the slight framework rear'd, with little pain ;
 Lithe creepers, then, the wicker sides supply,
 And the tall jungle-grass fit roofing gave
 Beneath the genial sky.
 And here did Kailyal, each returning day,
 Pour forth libations from the brook to pay
 The Spirits of her Sires their grateful rite ;
 In such libations pour'd in open glades,
 Beside clear streams and solitary shades,
 The Spirits of the virtuous dead delight.
 And duly here, to Marriataly's praise,
 The Maid, as with an angel's voice of song,
 Poured her melodious lays
 Upon the gales of even,
 And gliding in religious dance along,

Moved graceful as the dark-eyed Nymphs of Heaven,
Such harmony to all her steps was given.

Thus ever, in her Father's doating eye,
Kailyal perform'd the customary rite ;
He, patient of his burning pain the while,
Beheld her, and approved her pious toil ;
And sometimes at the sight
A melancholy smile
Would gleam upon his awful countenance.
He too by day and night, and every hour,
Paid to a higher Power his sacrifice ;
An offering, not of ghee, or fruit, and rice,
Flower-crown, or blood ; but of a heart subdued,
A resolute, unconquer'd fortitude,
An agony repress, a will resign'd,
To her, who, on her secret throne reclined,
Amid the Sea of Milk, by Veeshnoo's side,
Looks with an eye of mercy on mankind.
By the Preserver, with his power endued,
There Voomdavee¹ beholds this lower clime,
And marks the silent sufferings of the good,
To recompense them in her own good time.

O force of faith ! O strength of virtuous will !
Behold him in his endless martyrdom,
Triumphant still !
The Curse still burning in his heart and brain,
And yet doth he remain
Patient the while, and tranquil, and content !
The pious soul hath framed unto itself

¹ The wife of Veeshnoo, the goddess of the Earth and of Patience.—ED.

A second nature, to exist in pain
As in its own allotted element.

VII.—THE CITY OF THE GIANT BALY¹

SUCH was the talk they held upon their way,
Of him to whose old City they were bound ;
And now, upon their journey, many a day
Had risen and closed, and many a week gone round,
And many a realm and region had they pass'd,
When now the Ancient Towers appear'd at last.

Their golden summits in the noon-day light,
Shone o'er the dark-green deep that roll'd between
For domes, and pinnacles, and spires were seen
Peering above the sea, . . a mournful sight !
Well might the sad beholder ween from thence
What works of wonder the devouring wave
Had swallow'd there, when monuments so brave
Bore record of their old magnificence.

And on the sandy shore, beside the verge
Of Ocean, here and there, a rock-hewn fane
Resisted in its strength, the surf and surge
That on their deep foundations beat in vain.

In solitude the Ancient Temples stood,
Once resonant with instrument and song,
And solemn dance of festive multitude ;
Now as the weary ages pass along,
Hearing no voice save of the Ocean flood,
Which roars for ever on the restless shores ;
Or visiting their solitary caves,

¹ Ladurlad and Kailyal journey to the Sepulchres of the Ancient Kings under the waves to liberate the imprisoned Ereenia. —ED.

The lonely sound of winds, that moan around
 Accordant to the melancholy waves.

With reverence did the travellers see
 The works of ancient days, and silently
 Approach the shore. Now on the yellow sand,
 Where round their feet the rising surges part,
 They stand. Ladurlad's heart
 Exulted in his wondrous destiny.
 To Heaven he raised his hand
 In attitude of stern heroic pride ;
 Oh what a power, he cried,
 Thou dreadful Rajah, doth thy curse impart !
 I thank thee now ! . . Then turning to the Maid,
 Thou seest how far and wide
 Yon Towers extend, he said,
 My search must needs be long. Meantime the flood
 Will cast thee up thy food, . .
 And in the Chambers of the Rock by night,
 Take thou thy safe abode.
 No prowling beast to harm thee, or affright,
 Can enter there ; but wrap thyself with care
 From the foul Birds obscene that thirst for blood ;
 For in such caverns doth the Bat delight
 To have its haunts. Do thou with stone and shout,
 Ere thou liest down at evening, scare them out,
 And in this robe of mine involve thy feet.
 Duly commend us both to Heaven in prayer,
 Be of good heart, and may thy sleep be sweet !

So saying, he put back his arm, and gave
 The cloth which girt his loins, and press'd her hand
 With fervent love, then from the sand

Advanced into the sea ; the coming Wave
 Which knew Kehama's curse, before his way
 Started, and on he went as on dry land,
 And still around his path the waters parted.
 She stands upon the shore, where sea-weeds play,
 Lashing her polish'd ankles, and the spray
 Which off her Father, like a rainbow, fled,
 Falls on her like a shower ; there Kailyal stands,
 And sees the billows rise above his head.
 She at the startling sight, forgot the power
 The Curse had given him, and held forth her hands
 Imploringly, . . . her voice was on the wind,
 And the deaf Ocean o'er Ladurlad closed.
 Soon she recall'd his destiny to mind,
 And shaking off that natural fear, composed
 Her soul with prayer, to wait the event resign'd.

Alone, upon the solitary strand,
 The lovely one is left ; behold her go,
 Pacing with patient footsteps, to and fro,
 Along the bending sand.
 Save her, ye Gods ! from Evil Powers, and here
 From man she need not fear :
 For never Traveller comes near
 These awful ruins of the days of yore,
 Nor fisher's bark, nor venturous mariner,
 Approach the sacred shore.
 All day, she walk'd the beach, at night she sought
 The Chamber of the Rock ; with stone and shout
 Assail'd the Bats obscene, and scared them out ;
 Then in her Father's robe involved her feet,
 And wrapt her mantle round to guard her head,
 And laid her down ; the rock was Kailyal's bed,

Her chamber-lamps were in the starry sky,
The winds and waters were her lullaby.

Be of good heart, and may thy sleep be sweet,
Ladurlad said : . . Alas ! that cannot be
To one whose days are days of misery.
How often did she stretch her hands to greet
Ereenia, rescued in the dreams of night !
How oft amid the vision of delight,
Fear in her heart all is not as it seems ;
Then from unsettled slumber start, and hear
The Winds that moan above, the Waves below !
Thou hast been call'd, O Sleep ! the friend of Woe,
But 'tis the happy who have call'd thee so.

Another day, another night are gone,
A second passes, and a third wanes on.
So long she paced the shore,
So often on the beach she took her stand,
That the wild Sea-Birds knew her, and no more
Fled, when she pass'd beside them on the strand.
Bright shine the golden summits in the light
Of the noon-sun, and lovelier far by night
Their moonlight glories o'er the sea they shed :
Fair is the dark-green deep : by night and day
Unvex'd with storms, the peaceful billows play,
As when they closed upon Ladurlad's head ;
The firmament above is bright and clear ;
The sea-fowl, lords of water, air, and land,
Joyous alike upon the wing appear,
Or when they ride the waves, or walk the sand ;
Beauty and light and joy are every where ;
There is no sadness and no sorrow here,

Save what that single human breast contains,
But oh ! what hopes, and fears, and pains are there !

Seven miserable days the expectant Maid,
From earliest dawn till evening, watch'd the shore ;
Hope left her then ; and in her heart she said,
Never should she behold her Father more.

VIII.—THE ANCIENT SEPULCHRES ¹

WHEN the broad Ocean on Ladurlad's head
Had closed and arch'd him o'er,
With steady tread he held his way
Adown the sloping shore.
The dark-green waves with emerald hue,
Imbue the beams of day,
And on the wrinkled sand below,
Rolling their mazy network to and fro,
Light shadows shift and play.
The hungry Shark, at scent of prey,
Toward Ladurlad darted ;
Beholding then that human form erect,
How like a God the depths he trod,
Appall'd the monster started,
And in his fear departed.
Onward Ladurlad went with heart elate,
And now hath reach'd the Ancient City's gate.

Wondering he stood awhile to gaze
Upon the works of elder days.
The brazen portals open stood,

¹ The narrative here proceeds from the preceding extract without omission.—ED.

Even as the fearful multitude
 Had left them, when they fled
 Before the rising flood.
 High over-head, sublime,
 The mighty gateway's storied roof was spread,
 Dwarfing the puny piles of younger time.
 With the deeds of days of yore
 That ample roof was sculptured o'er,
 And many a godlike form there met his eye,
 And many an emblem dark of mystery.
 Through these wide portals oft had Baly rode
 Triumphant from his proud abode,
 When, in his greatness, he bestrode
 The Aullay, hugest of four-footed kind,
 The Aullay-Horse, that in his force,
 With elephantine trunk, could bind
 And lift the elephant, and on the wind
 Whirl him away, with sway and swing,
 Even like a pebble from the practised sling.

Those streets which never, since the days of yore,
 By human footstep had been visited,
 Those streets which never more
 A human foot shall tread,
 Ladurlad trod. In sun-light and sea-green,
 The thousand Palaces were seen
 Of that proud City, whose superb abodes
 Seem'd rear'd by Giants for the immortal Gods.
 How silent and how beautiful they stand,
 Like things of Nature ! the eternal rocks
 Themselves not firmer. Neither hath the sand
 Drifted within their gates and choak'd their doors,
 Nor slime defiled their pavements and their floors.

Nor ever did the Lord of Light,
Who circles Earth and Heaven upon his way,
Behold from eldest time a goodlier sight
Than were the groves which Baly, in his might,
Made for his chosen place of solace and delight.

It was a Garden still beyond all price,
Even yet it was a place of Paradise ;
For where the mighty Ocean could not spare,
There had he with his own creation,
Sought to repair his work of devastation.
And here were coral bowers,
And grots of madrepores,
And banks of sponge, as soft and fair to eye
As e'er was mossy bed
Whereon the Wood Nymphs lie
With languid limbs in summer's sultry hours.
Here too were living flowers
Which, like a bud compacted,
Their purple cups contracted,
And now in open blossom spread,
Stretch'd like green anthers many a seeking head.
And arborets of jointed stone were there,
And plants of fibres fine, as silkworm's thread ;
Yea, beautiful as Mermaid's golden hair
Upon the waves dispread.
Others that, like the broad banana growing,
Raised their long wrinkled leaves of purple hue,
Like streamers wide out-flowing.
And whatsoe'er the depths of Ocean hide
From human eyes, Ladurlad there espied,
Trees of the deep, and shrubs and fruits and flowers,
As fair as ours,

Wherewith the Sea-Nymphs love their locks to braid,
 When to their father's hall, at festival
 Repairing they, in emulous array,
 Their charms display,
 To grace the banquet, and the solemn day.

The golden fountains had not ceased to flow :
 And where they mingled with the briny Sea,
 There was a sight of wonder and delight,
 To see the fish, like birds in air,
 Above Ladurlad flying.

Round those strange waters they repair,
 Their scarlet fins outspread and plying,
 They float with gentle hovering there ;
 And now upon those little wings,
 As if to dare forbidden things,
 With wilful purpose bent,
 Swift as an arrow from a bow,
 They shoot across, and to and fro,
 In rapid glance, like lightning go
 Through that unwonted element.

IX.—KEHAMA ESSAYS TO GAIN THE THRONE OF
 PADALON AND DRINKS THE AMREETA-CUP ¹

So spake the King of Padalon, when, lo !
 The voice of lamentation ceased in Hell,
 And sudden silence all around them fell,
 Silence more wild and terrible

Than all the infernal dissonance before.
 Through that portentous stillness, far away,

¹ Padalon, the nether-world, is ruled by Yamen, who guards the cup which confers immortality.—ED.

Unwonted sounds were heard, advancing on
 And deepening on their way ;
 For now the inexorable hour
 Was come, and, in the fulness of his power,
 Now that the dreadful rites had all been done,
 Kehama from the Swerga hasten'd down,
 To seize upon the throne of Padalon.

He came in all his might and majesty,
 With all his terrors clad, and all his pride ;
 And, by the attribute of Deity,
 Which he had won from Heaven, self-multiplied,
 The Almighty Man appear'd on every side.

In the same indivisible point of time,
 At the eight Gates he stood at once, and beat
 The Warden-Gods of Hell beneath his feet ;
 Then, in his brazen Cars of triumph, straight,
 At the same moment, drove through every gate.

By Aullays, hugest of created kind,
 Fiercest, and fleeter than the viewless wind,
 His Cars were drawn, ten yokes of ten abreast, . .

What less sufficed for such almighty weight ?
 Eight bridges from the fiery flood arose
 Growing before his way ; and on he goes,
 And drives the thundering Chariot wheels along,
 At once o'er all the roads of Padalon.

Silent and motionless remain
 The Asuras¹ on their bed of pain,
 Waiting, with breathless hope, the great event.
 All Hell was hush'd in dread,
 Such awe that omnipresent coming spread ;

¹ The rebel spirits in chains.—ED.

Nor had its voice been heard, though all its rout
 Innumerable had lifted up one shout ;
 Nor if the infernal firmament
 Had in one unimaginable burst
 Spent its collected thunders, had the sound,
 Been audible, such louder terrors went
 Before his forms substantial. Round about
 The presence scattered lightnings far and wide,
 That quench'd on every side,
 With their intensest blaze, the feebler fire
 Of Padalon, even as the stars go out,
 When, with prodigious light,
 Some blazing meteor fills the astonish'd night.

The Diamond City shakes !
 The adamantine Rock
 Is loosen'd with the shock !
 From its foundation moved, it heaves and quakes ;
 The brazen portals crumbling fall to dust ;
 Prone fall the Giant Guards
 Beneath the Aullays crush'd ;
 On, on, through Yamenpur, their thundering feet
 Speed from all points to Yamen's Judgement-seat.
 And lo ! where multiplied,
 Behind, before him, and on every side,
 Wielding all weapons in his countless hands,
 Around the Lord of Hell Kehama stands !
 Then too the Lord of Hell put forth his might :
 Thick darkness, blacker than the blackest night,
 Rose from their wrath, and veil'd
 The unutterable fight.
 The power of Fate and Sacrifice prevail'd,
 And soon the strife was done.

Then did the Man-God re-assume
 His unity, absorbing into one
 The consubstantiate shapes ; and as the gloom
 Opened, fallen Yamen on the ground was seen,
 His neck beneath the conquering Rajah's feet,
 Who on the marble tomb
 Had his triumphal seat.

Silent the Man-Almighty sate ; a smile
 Gleam'd on his dreadful lips, the while
 Dallying with power, he paused from following up
 His conquest, as a man in social hour
 Sips of the grateful cup,
 Again and yet again with curious taste
 Searching its subtle flavour ere he drink :
 Even so Kehama now forbore his haste,
 Having within his reach whate'er he sought,
 On his own haughty power he seem'd to muse,
 Pampering his arrogant heart with silent thought.
 Before him stood the Golden Throne in sight,
 Right opposite ; he could not choose but see
 Nor seeing choose but wonder. Who are ye
 Who bear the Golden Throne tormented there ?
 He cried ; for whom doth Destiny prepare
 The Imperial Seat, and why are ye but Three ?

FIRST STATUE

I of the Children of Mankind was first,
 Me miserable ! who, adding store to store,
 Heapt up superfluous wealth ; and now accurst,
 For ever I the frantic crime deplore.

SECOND STATUE

I o'er my Brethren of Mankind the first
 Usurping power, set up a throne sublime,
 A King and Conqueror : therefore thus accurst,
 For ever I in vain repent the crime.

THIRD STATUE

I on the Children of Mankind the first,
 In God's most holy name, imposed a tale
 Of impious falsehood ; therefore thus accurst,
 For ever I in vain the crime bewail.

Even as thou here beholdest us,
 Here we have stood, tormented thus,
 Such countless ages, that they seem to be
 Long as eternity,
 And still we are but Three.
 A Fourth will come to share
 Our pain, at yonder vacant corner bear
 His portion of the burthen, and compleat
 The Golden Throne for Yamen's Judgement-seat.
 Thus hath it been appointed : he must be
 Equal in guilt to us, the guilty Three.
 Kehama, come ! too long we wait for thee !

Thereat, with one accord,
 The Three took up the word, like choral song,
 Come Rajah ! Man-God ! Earth's Almighty Lord !
 Kehama, come ! we wait for thee too long.

A short and sudden laugh of wondering pride
 Burst from him in his triumph : to reply
 Scornful he deign'd not ; but with alter'd eye

Wherein some doubtful meaning seem'd to lie,
 He turn'd to Kailyal. Maiden, thus he cried,
 I need not bid thee see
 How vain it is to strive with Fate's decree,
 When hither thou hast fled to fly from me,
 And lo ! even here thou find'st me at thy side.
 Mine thou must be, being doom'd with me to share
 The Amreeta-cup of immortality ;
 Yea, by Myself I swear,
 It hath been thus appointed. Joyfully
 Join then thy hand and heart and will with mine,
 Nor at such glorious destiny repine,
 Nor in thy folly more provoke my wrath divine.

She answer'd : I have said. It must not be !
 Almighty as thou art,
 Thou hast put all things underneath thy feet ;
 But still the resolute heart
 And virtuous will are free.
 Never, oh ! never, . . never . . can there be
 Communion, Rajah, between thee and me.

Once more, quoth he, I urge, and once alone.
 Thou seest yon Golden Throne,
 Where I anon shall set thee by my side ;
 Take thou thy seat thereon,
 Kehama's willing bride,
 And I will place the Kingdoms of the World
 Beneath thy Father's feet,
 Appointing him the King of mortal men :
 Else underneath that Throne,
 The Fourth supporter he shall stand and groan ;
 Prayers will be vain to move my mercy then.

Again the Virgin answer'd, I have said !
 Ladurlad caught her in his proud embrace,
 While on his neck she hid
 In agony her face.

Bring forth the Amreeta-cup ! Kehama cried
 To Yamen, rising sternly in his pride.
 It is within the Marble Sepulchre,
 The vanquish'd Lord of Padalon replied,
 Bid it be open'd. Give thy treasure up !
 Exclaim'd the Man-Almighty to the Tomb.
 And at his voice and look

The massy fabric shook, and open'd wide.
 A huge Anatomy was seen reclined
 Within its marble womb. Give me the Cup !
 Again Kehama cried ; no other charm
 Was needed than that voice of stern command.
 From his repose the ghastly form arose,
 Put forth his bony and gigantic arm,
 And gave the Amreeta to the Rajah's hand.
 Take ! drink ! with accents dread the Spectre said,
 For thee and Kailyal hath it been assign'd,
 Ye only of the Children of Mankind.

Then was the Man-Almighty's heart elate ;
 This is the consummation ! he exclaim'd ;
 Thus have I triumphed over Death and Fate.
 Now, Seeva ! look to thine abode !
 Henceforth, on equal footing we engage,
 Alike immortal now, and we shall wage
 Our warfare, God to God !
 Joy fill'd his impious soul,
 And to his lips he raised the fatal bowl.

Thus long the Glendoveer had stood
 Watching the wonders of the eventful hour,
 Amazed but undismay'd ; for in his heart
 Faith, overcoming fear, maintain'd its power.
 Nor had that faith abated, when the God
 Of Padalon was beaten down in fight ;
 For then he look'd to see the heavenly might
 Of Seeva break upon them. But when now
 He saw the Amreeta in Kehama's hand,
 An impulse which defied all self-command

In that extremity

Stung him, and he resolved to seize the cup,
 And dare the Rajah's force in Seeva's sight.
 Forward he sprung to tempt the unequal fray,
 When lo ! the Anatomy,
 With warning arm, withstood his desperate way,
 And from the Golden Throne the fiery Three
 Again, in one accord, renew'd their song,
 Kehama, come ! we wait for thee too long.

O fool of drunken hope and frantic vice !
 Madman ! to seek for power beyond thy scope
 Of knowledge, and to deem
 Less than Omniscience could suffice
 To wield Omnipotence ! O fool, to dream
 That immortality could be
 The meed of evil ! . . yea, thou hast it now,
 Victim of thine own wicked heart's device,
 Thou hast thine object now, and now must pay the
 price.

He did not know the holy mystery
 Of that divinest cup, that as the lips

Which touch it, even such its quality,
 Good or malignant : Madman ! and he thinks
 The blessed prize is won, and joyfully he drinks.

Then Seeva open'd on the Accursed One
 His Eye of Anger : upon him alone
 The wrath-beam fell. He shudders . . but too late ;
 The deed is done,
 The dreadful liquor works the will of Fate.
 Immortal he would be,
 Immortal he is made ; but through his veins
 Torture at once and immortality,
 A stream of poison doth the Amreeta run,
 And while within the burning anguish flows,
 His outward body glows
 Like molten ore, beneath the avenging Eye,
 Doom'd thus to live and burn eternally.

The fiery Three,
 Beholding him, set up a fiendish cry,
 A song of jubilee ;
 Come, Brother, come ! they sung ; too long
 Have we expected thee,
 Henceforth we bear no more
 The unequal weight ; Come, Brother, we are Four !

Vain his almightiness, for mightier pain
 Subdued all power ; pain ruled supreme alone ;
 And yielding to the bony hand
 The unemptied cup, he moved toward the Throne,
 And at the vacant corner took his stand.
 Behold the Golden Throne at length complete,
 And Yamen silently ascends the Judgement-seat.

For two alone, of all mankind, to me
 The Amreeta-cup was given,
 Then said the Anatomy ;
 The Man hath drunk, the Woman's turn is next.
 Come, Kailyal, come, receive thy doom,
 And do the Will of Heaven ! . .

Wonder, and Fear, and Awe at once perplex
 The mortal Maiden's heart, but over all
 Hope rose triumphant. With a trembling hand,
 Obedient to his call.

She took the fated Cup ; and, lifting up
 Her eyes, where holy tears began to swell,
 Is it not your command,
 Ye heavenly Powers ? as on her knees she fell,
 The pious Virgin cried ;
 Ye know my innocent will, my heart sincere,
 Ye govern all things still,
 And wherefore should I fear !

She said, and drank. The Eye of Mercy beam'd
 Upon the Maid : a cloud of fragrance steam'd
 Like incense-smoke, as all her mortal frame
 Dissolved beneath the potent agency
 Of that mysterious draught ; such quality,
 From her pure touch, the fated Cup partook.
 Like one entranced she knelt,
 Feeling her body melt
 Till all but what was heavenly pass'd away :
 Yet still she felt
 Her Spirit strong within her, the same heart,
 With the same loves, and all her heavenly
 part
 Unchanged, and ripen'd to such perfect state

In this miraculous birth, as here on Earth,
Dimly our holiest hopes anticipate.

Mine ! mine ! with rapturous joy Ereenia cried,
Immortal now, and yet not more divine ;
Mine, mine, . . . for ever mine !
The immortal Maid replied,
For ever, ever, thine !

Then Yamen said, O thou to whom by Fate,
Alone of all mankind, this lot is given,
Daughter of Earth, but now the Child of Heaven !
Go with thy heavenly Mate,
Partaker now of his immortal bliss ;
Go to the Swerga Bowers,
And there recall the hours
Of endless happiness.

But that sweet Angel, for she still retain'd
Her human loves and human piety,
As if reluctant at the God's commands,
Linger'd, with anxious eye
Upon her Father fix'd, and spread her hands
Toward him wistfully.
Go ! Yamen said, nor cast that look behind
Upon Ladurlad at this parting hour,
For thou shalt find him in thy Mother's Bower.

The Car, for Carmala his word obey'd,
Moved on, and bore away the Maid,
While from the Golden Throne the Lord of Death
With love benignant on Ladurlad smiled,
And gently on his head his blessing laid.

As sweetly as a Child,
Whom neither thought disturbs nor care encumbers,
Tired with long play, at close of summer day,
Lies down and slumbers,
Even thus as sweet a boon of sleep partaking,
By Yamen blest, Ladurlad sunk to rest.
Blessed that sleep ! more blessed was the waking !
For on that night a heavenly morning broke,
The light of heaven was round him when he woke,
And in the Swerga, in Yedillian's Bower,
All whom he loved he met, to part no more,

From "Roderick, the Last of the Goths."

I.—RODERICK, PENITENT, JOURNEYS AS A HERMIT TO COIMBRA ¹

'Twas now the earliest morning ; soon the Sun,
Rising above Albardos, pour'd his light
Amid the forest, and with ray aslant
Entering its depth, illumed the branchless pines,
Brighten'd their bark, tinged with a redder hue
Its rusty stains, and cast along the floor
Long lines of shadow, where they rose erect
Like pillars of the temple. With slow foot
Roderick pursued his way ; for penitence,
Remorse which gave no respite, and the long
And painful conflict of his troubled soul,
Had worn him down. Now brighter thoughts arose,
And that triumphant vision floated still
Before his sight with all her blazonry,
Her castled helm, and the victorious sword
That flash'd like lightning o'er the field of blood.

¹ King Roderick, having done violent wrong to Florinda, daughter of Count Julian, her father invited to Spain the Moorish invaders. Roderick, fighting bravely, was defeated, and long hid himself from men in penitent austerity.—ED.

Sustain'd by thoughts like these, from morn till eve
 He journey'd, and drew near Leyria's walls.
 'Twas even-song time, but not a bell was heard ;
 Instead thereof, on her polluted towers,
 Bidding the Moors to their unhallow'd prayer,
 The cryer stood, and with his sonorous voice
 Fill'd the delicious vale where Lena winds
 Thro' groves and pastoral meads. The sound, the sight
 Of turban, girdle, robe, and scymitar,
 And tawny skins, awoke contending thoughts
 Of anger, shame, and anguish in the Goth ;
 The face of human-kind so long unseen
 Confused him now, and through the streets he went
 With haggéd mien, and countenance like one
 Crazed or bewilder'd. All who met him turn'd,
 And wonder'd as he pass'd. One stopt him short,
 Put alms into his hand, and then desired
 In broken Gothic speech, the moon-struck man
 To bless him. With a look of vacancy
 Roderick received the alms ; his wandering eye
 Fell on the money, and the fallen King,
 Seeing his own royal impress on the piece,
 Broke out into a quick convulsive voice,
 That seem'd like laughter first, but ended soon
 In hollow groans suppress ; the Musselman
 Shrunk at the ghastly sound, and magnified
 The name of Allah as he hasten'd on.
 A Christian woman spinning at her door
 Beheld him, and, with sudden pity touch'd,
 She laid her spindle by, and running in
 Took bread, and following after call'd him back,
 And placing in his passive hands the loaf,
 She said, Christ Jesus for his mother's sake

Have mercy on thee ! With a look that seem'd
Like idiotcy he heard her, and stood still,
Staring awhile ; then bursting into tears
Wept like a child, and thus relieved his heart,
Full even to bursting else with swelling thoughts.
So through the streets, and through the northern gate
Did Roderick, reckless of a resting-place,
With feeble yet with hurried step pursue
His agitated way ; and when he reach'd
The open fields, and found himself alone
Beneath the starry canopy of Heaven,
The sense of solitude, so dreadful late,
Was then repose and comfort. There he stopt
Beside a little rill, and brake the loaf ;
And shedding o'er that long untasted food
Painful but quiet tears, with grateful soul
He breathed thanksgiving forth, then made his bed
On heath and myrtle.

But when he arose
At day-break and pursued his way, his heart
Felt lighten'd that the shock of mingling first
Among his fellow-kind was overpast ;
And journeying on, he greeted whom he met
With such short interchange of benison
As each to other gentle travellers give,
Recovering thus the power of social speech
Which he had long disused. When hunger prest
He ask'd for alms : slight supplication served ;
A countenance so pale and woe-begone
Moved all to pity ; and the marks it bore
Of rigorous penance and austerest life,
With something too of majesty that still
Appear'd amid the wreck, inspired a sense

Of reverence too. The goat-herd on the hills
Open'd his scrip for him ; the babe in arms,
Affrighted at his visage, turn'd away,
And clinging to the mother's neck in tears
Would yet again look up, and then again
Shrink back, with cry renew'd. The bolder imps
Sporting beside the way, at his approach
Brake off their games for wonder, and stood still
In silence ; some among them cried, A Saint !
The village matron when she gave him food
Besought his prayers ; and one entreated him
To lay his healing hands upon her child,
For with a sore and hopeless malady
Wasting, it long had lain, . . and sure, she said,
He was a man of God.

Thus travelling on
He pass'd the vale where wild Arunca pours
Its wintry torrents ; and the happier site
Of old Conimbrica, whose ruin'd towers
Bore record of the fierce Alani's wrath.
Mondego too he cross'd, not yet renown'd
In poets' amorous lay ; and left behind
The walls at whose foundation pious hands
Of Priest and Monk and Bishop meekly toil'd, . .
So had the insulting Arian given command.
Those stately palaces and rich domains
Were now the Moor's, and many a weary age
Must Coimbra wear the misbeliever's yoke,
Before Fernando's banner through her gate
Shall pass triumphant, and her hallow'd Mosque
Behold the hero of Bivar receive
The knighthood which he glorified so oft
In his victorious fields. Oh, if the years

To come might then have risen on Roderick's soul,
How had they kindled and consoled his heart ! . . .
What joy might Douro's haven then have given,
Whence Portugal, the faithful and the brave,
Shall take her name illustrious ! . . what, those walls
Where Mumadona one day will erect
Convent and town and towers, which shall become
The cradle of that famous monarchy !
What joy might these prophetic scenes have given, . .
What ample vengeance on the Musselman,
Driven out with foul defeat, and made to feel
In Africa the wrongs he wrought to Spain ;
And still pursued by that relentless sword,
Even to the farthest Orient, where his power
Received its mortal wound.

II.—RODERICK AND FLORINDA ¹

SOON by devious tracks
They turn'd aside. The favouring moon arose,
To guide them on their flight through upland paths
Remote from frequentage, and dales retired,
Forest and mountain glen. Before their feet
The fire-flies, swarming in the woodland shade,
Sprung up like sparks, and twinkled round their way ;
The timorous blackbird, starting at their step,
Fled from the thicket with shrill note of fear ;

¹ Pelayo, cousin to Roderick, and founder of the Spanish Monarchy, journeys in company with Florinda towards the hills. The boy Alphonso, son of Count Pedro, with his servant Hoya, joins them in their flight. Roderick, known only as a zealous hermit, with his foster-father Siverian, awaits them in a grove.—ED.

And far below them in the peopled dell,
When all the soothing sounds of eve had ceased,
The distant watch-dog's voice at times was heard,
Answering the nearer wolf. All through the night
Among the hills they travell'd silently ;
Till when the stars were setting, at what hour
The breath of Heaven is coldest, they beheld
Within a lonely grove the expected fire,
Where Roderick and his comrade anxiously
Look'd for the appointed meeting. Halting there,
They from the burthen and the bit relieved
Their patient bearers, and around the fire
Partook of needful food and grateful rest.

Bright rose the flame replenish'd ; it illumed
The cork-tree's furrow'd rind, its rifts and swells
And redder scars, . . and where its aged boughs
O'erbower'd the travellers, cast upon the leaves
A floating, grey, unrealizing gleam.
Alphonso, light of heart, upon the heath
Lay carelessly dispread, in happy dreams
Of home ; his faithful Hoya slept beside.
Years and fatigue to old Siverian brought
Easy oblivion ; and the Prince himself,
Yielding to weary nature's gentle will,
Forgot his cares awhile. Florinda sate
Beholding Roderick with fix'd eyes intent,
Yet unregardant of the countenance
Whereon they dwelt ; in other thoughts absorb'd,
Collecting fortitude for what she yearn'd,
Yet trembled to perform. Her steady look
Disturb'd the Goth, albeit he little ween'd
What agony awaited him that hour.

Her face, well nigh as changed as his, was now
Half hidden, and the lustre of her eye
Extinct ; nor did her voice awaken in him
One startling recollection when she spake,
So altered were its tones.

Father, she said,
All thankful as I am to leave behind
The unhappy walls of Cordoba, not less
Of consolation doth my heart receive
At sight of one to whom I may disclose
The sins which trouble me, and at his feet
Lay down repentantly, in Jesu's name,
The burthen of my spirit. In his name
Hear me, and pour into a wounded soul
The balm of pious counsel. . . Saying thus,
She drew toward the minister ordain'd,
And kneeling by him, Father, dost thou know
The wretch who kneels beside thee ? she enquired.
He answered, Surely we are each to each
Equally unknown.

Then said she, Here thou seest
One who is known too fatally for all, . .
The daughter of Count Julian. . . . Well it was
For Roderick that no eye beheld him now ;
From head to foot a sharper pang than death
Thrill'd him ; his heart, as at a mortal stroke,
Ceased from its functions ; his breath fail'd, and when
The power of life recovering set its springs
Again in action, cold and clammy sweat
Starting at every pore suffused his frame.
Their presence help'd him to subdue himself ;
For else, had none been nigh, he would have fallen
Before Florinda prostrate on the earth,

And in that mutual agony belike
Both souls had taken flight. She mark'd him not ;
For having told her name, she bow'd her head,
Breathing a short and silent prayer to Heaven,
While, as a penitent, she wrought herself
To open to his eye her hidden wounds.

Father, at length she said, all tongues amid
This general ruin shed their bitterness
On Roderick, load his memory with reproach,
And with their curses persecute his soul. . . .
Why shouldst thou tell me this ? exclaim'd the Goth,
From his cold forehead wiping as he spake
The death-like moisture : . . Why of Roderick's guilt
Tell me ? Or thinkest thou I know it not ?
Alas ! who hath not heard the hideous tale
Of Roderick's shame ! Babes learn it from their
nurses,
And children, by their mothers unreprieved,
Link their first execrations to his name.
Oh, it hath caught a taint of infamy,
That, like Iscariot's, through all time shall last,
Reeking and fresh for ever !

There ! she cried,
Drawing her body backward where she knelt,
And stretching forth her arms with head upraised, . .
There ! it pursues me still ! . . I came to thee,
Father, for comfort, and thou heapest fire
Upon my head. But hear me patiently,
And let me undeceive thee ; self-abased,
Not to arraign another, do I come ; . .
I come a self-accuser, self-condemn'd
To take upon myself the pain deserved ;

For I have drunk the cup of bitterness,
And having drunk therein of heavenly grace,
I must not put away the cup of shame.

Thus as she spake she falter'd at the close,
And in that dying fall her voice sent forth
Somewhat of its original sweetness. Thou ! . .
Thou self-abased ! exclaim'd the astonish'd King ; . .
Thou self-condemn'd ! . . The cup of shame for thee !
Thee . . thee, Florinda ! . . . But the very excess
Of passion check'd his speech, restraining thus
From farther transport, which had haply else
Master'd him ; and he sate like one entranced,
Gazing upon that countenance so fallen,
So changed : her face, raised from its muffler now,
Was turn'd toward him, and the fire-light shone
Full on its mortal paleness ; but the shade
Conceal'd the King.

III.—SPANISH LANDSCAPE

TWELVE weary days with unremitting speed,
Shunning frequented tracks, the travellers
Pursued their way ; the mountain path they chose,
The forest or the lonely heath wide-spread,
Where cistus shrubs sole-seen exhaled at noon
Their fine balsamic odour all around ;
Strew'd with their blossoms, frail as beautiful,
The thirsty soil at eve ; and when the sun
Relumed the gladden'd earth, opening anew
Their stores exuberant, prodigal as frail,
Whiten'd again the wilderness. They left
The dark Sierra's skirts behind, and cross'd

The wilds where Ana in her native hills
Collects her sister springs, and hurries on
Her course melodious amid loveliest glens,
With forest and with fruitage overbower'd.
These scenes profusely blest by Heaven they left,
Where o'er the hazel and the quince the vine
Wide-mantling spreads ; and clinging round the cork
And ilex, hangs amid their dusky leaves
Garlands of brightest hue, with reddening fruit
Pendant, or clusters cool of glassy green. .
So holding on o'er mountain and o'er vale,
Tagus they cross'd where midland on his way
The King of Rivers rolls his stately stream ;
And rude Alverches wide and stony bed,
And Duero distant far, and many a stream
And many a field obscure, in future war
For bloody theatre of famous deeds
Foredoom'd ; and deserts where in years to come
Shall populous towns arise, and crested towers
And stately temples rear their heads on high.

Cautious with course circuitous they shunn'd
The embattled city, which in eldest time
Thrice-greatest Hermes built, so fables say,
Now subjugate, but fated to behold
Ere long the heroic Prince (who passing now
Unknown and silently the dangerous track,
Turns thither his regardant eye) come down
Victorious from the heights, and bear abroad
Her banner'd Lion, symbol to the Moor
Of rout and death through many an age of blood.
Lo, there the Asturian hills ! Far in the west,
Huge Rabanal and Foncebadon huge,

Pre-eminent, their giant bulk display,
Darkening with earliest shade the distant vales
Of Leon, and with evening premature.
Far in Cantabria eastward, the long line
Extends beyond the reach of eagle's eye,
When buoyant in mid-heaven the bird of Jove
Soars at his loftiest pitch. In the north, before
The travellers the Erbasian mountains rise,
Bounding the land beloved, their native land.

IV.—THE VOW OF SPAIN'S DELIVERANCE¹

REJOICING in their task,
The servants of the house with emulous love
Dispute the charge. One brings the cuirass, one
The buckler; this exultingly displays
The sword, his comrade lifts the helm on high :
The greaves, the gauntlets they divide ; a spur
Seems now to dignify the officious hand
Which for such service bears it to his Lord.
Greek artists in the imperial city forged
That splendid armour, perfect in their craft ;
With curious skill they wrought it, framed alike
To shine amid the pageantry of war,
And for the proof of battle. Many a time
Alphonso from his nurse's lap had stretch'd
His infant hands toward it eagerly,
Where gleaming to the central fire it hung
High in the hall ; and many a time had wish'd
With boyish ardour, that the day were come

¹ The scene is among the mountains, where Pelayo and the young Alphonso have joined Count Pedro and his followers ; Alphonso is about to receive his first armour. —ED.

When Pedro to his prayers would grant the boon,
His dearest heart's desire. Count Pedro then
Would smile, and in his heart rejoice to see
The noble instinct manifest itself.
Then too Favinia with maternal pride
Would turn her eyes exulting to her Lord,
And in that silent language bid him mark
His spirit in his boy ; all danger then
Was distant, and if secret forethought faint
Of manhood's perils, and the chance of war,
Hateful to mothers, pass'd across her mind,
The ill remote gave to the present hour
A heighten'd feeling of secure delight.

No season this for old solemnities,
For wassailry and sport ; . . the bath, the bed,
The vigil, . . all preparatory rites
Omitted now, . . here in the face of Heaven,
Before the vassals of his father's house,
With them in instant peril to partake
The chance of life or death, the heroic boy
Dons his first arms ; the coated scales of steel
Which o'er the tunic to his knees depend,
The hose, the sleeves of mail ; bareheaded then
He stood. But when Count Pedro took the spurs
And bent his knee in service to his son,
Alphonso from that gesture half drew back,
Starting in reverence, and a deeper hue
Spread o'er the glow of joy which flush'd his cheeks.
Do thou the rest, Pelayo ! said the Count ;
So shall the ceremony of this hour
Exceed in honour what in form it lacks.
The Prince from Hoya's faithful hand received

The sword ; he girt it round the youth, and drew
And placed it in his hand ; unsheathing then
His own good falchion, with its burnish'd blade
He touch'd Alphonso's neck, and with a kiss
Gave him his rank in arms.

Thus long the crowd
Had look'd intently on, in silence hush'd ;
Loud and continuous now with one accord,
Shout following shout, their acclamations rose ;
Blessings were breathed from every heart, and joy,
Powerful alike in all, which as with force
Of an inebriating cup inspired
The youthful, from the eye of age drew tears.
The uproar died away, when standing forth,
Roderick with lifted hand besought a pause
For speech, and moved towards the youth. I too,
Young Baron, he began, must do my part ;
Not with prerogative of earthly power,
But as the servant of the living God,
The God of Hosts. This day thou promisest
To die when honour calls thee for thy faith,
For thy liege Lord, and for thy native land ;
The duties which at birth we all contract,
Are by the high profession of this hour
Made thine especially. Thy noble blood,
The thoughts with which thy childhood hath been fed,
And thine own noble nature more than all,
Are sureties for thee. But these dreadful times
Demand a farther pledge ; for it hath pleased
The Highest, as he tried his Saints of old,
So in the fiery furnace of his wrath
To prove and purify the sons of Spain ;
And they must knit their spirits to the proof,

Or sink, for ever lost. Hold forth thy sword,
Young Baron, and before thy people take
The vow which, in Toledo's sacred name,
Poor as these weeds bespeak me, I am here
To minister with delegated power.

With reverential awe was Roderick heard
By all, so well authority became
That mien and voice and countenance austere.
Pelayo with complacent eye beheld
The unlook'd-for interposal, and the Count
Bends toward Alphonso his approving head.
The youth obedient loosen'd from his belt
The sword, and looking, while his heart beat fast,
To Roderick, reverently expectant stood.

O noble youth, the Royal Goth pursued,
Thy country is in bonds ; an impious foe
Oppresses her ; he brings with him strange laws,
Strange language, evil customs, and false faith,
And forces them on Spain. Swear that thy soul
Will make no covenant with these accursed,
But that the sword shall be from this day forth
Thy children's portion, to be handed down
From sire to son, a sacred heritage,
Through every generation, till the work
Be done, and this insulted land hath drunk
In sacrifice, the last invader's blood !

Bear witness, ancient Mountains ! cried the youth,
And ye, my native Streams, who hold your course
For ever ; . . this dear Earth, and yonder Sky,
Be witness ! for myself I make the vow,

And for my children's children. Here I stand
Their sponsor, binding them in sight of Heaven,
As by a new baptismal sacrament,
To wage hereditary holy war,
Perpetual, patient, persevering war,
Till not one living enemy pollute
The sacred soil of Spain.

So as he ceased,
While yet toward the clear blue firmament
His eyes were raised, he lifted to his lips
The sword, with reverent gesture bending then
Devoutly kiss'd its cross.

And ye ! exclaimed
Roderick, as turning to the assembled troop
He motion'd with authoritative hand, . .
Ye children of the hills and sons of Spain !

Through every heart the rapid feeling ran, . .
For us ! they answer'd all with one accord,
And at the word they knelt : People and Prince,
The young and old, the father and the son,
At once they knelt ; with one accord they cried,
For us, and for our seed ! with one accord
They cross'd their fervent arms, and with bent head
Inclined toward that awful voice from whence
The inspiring impulse came. The Royal Goth
Made answer, I receive your vow for Spain
And for the Lord of Hosts : your cause is good,
Go forward in his spirit and his strength.

Ne'er in his happiest hours had Roderick
With such commanding majesty dispensed
His princely gifts, as dignified him now,

When with slow movement, solemnly upraised,
Toward the kneeling troop he spread his arms,
As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
And carried to all spirits with the act
Its effluent inspiration. Silently
The people knelt, and when they rose, such awe
Held them in silence, that the eagle's cry,
Who far above them, at her highest flight
A speck scarce visible, gyred round and round,
Was heard distinctly ; and the mountain stream,
Which from the distant glen sent forth its sounds
Wafted upon the wind, grew audible
In that deep hush of feeling, like the voice
Of waters in the stillness of the night.

V.—COVADONGA

SOON had the Prince¹
Behind him left the farthest dwelling-place
Of man ; no fields of waving corn were here,
Nor wicker storehouse for the autumnal grain,
Vineyard, nor bowery fig, nor fruitful grove ;
Only the rocky vale, the mountain stream,
Incumbent crags, and hills that over hills
Arose on either hand, here hung with woods,
Here rich with heath, that o'er some smooth ascent
Its purple glory spread, or golden gorse ;
Bare here, and striated with many a hue,
Scored by the wintry rain ; by torrents here
Riven, and with overhanging rocks abrupt.
Pelayo, upward as he cast his eyes

¹ Pelayo. —ED.

Where crags loose-hanging o'er the narrow pass
Impended, there beheld his country's strength
Insuperable, and in his heart rejoiced.
Oh that the Musselman were here, he cried,
With all his myriads ! While thy day endures,
Moor ! thou may'st lord it in the plains ; but here
Hath Nature for the free and brave prepared
A sanctuary, where no oppressor's power,
No might of human tyranny can pierce.

The tears which started then sprang not alone
From lofty thoughts of elevating joy ;
For love and admiration had their part,
And virtuous pride. Here then thou hast retired,
My Gaudiosa ! in his heart he said ;
Excellent woman ! ne'er was richer boon
By fate benign to favour'd man indulged,
Than when thou wert before the face of Heaven
Given me to be my children's mother, brave
And virtuous as thou art ! Here thou hast fled,
Thou who wert nurst in palaces, to dwell
In rocks and mountain caves ! . . The thought was
proud,
Yet not without a sense of inmost pain ;
For never had Pelayo till that hour
So deeply felt the force of solitude.
High over head the eagle soar'd serene,
And the grey lizard on the rocks below
Bask'd in the sun : no living creature else
In this remotest wilderness was seen ;
Nor living voice was there, . . only the flow
Of Deva, and the rushing of its springs
Long in the distance heard, which nearer now,

With endless repercussion deep and loud,
Throbb'd on the dizzy sense.

The ascending vale,
Long straiten'd by the narrowing mountains, here
Was closed. In front a rock, abrupt and bare,
Stood eminent, in height exceeding far
All edifice of human power, by King
Or Caliph, or barbaric Sultan rear'd,
Or mightier tyrants of the world of old,
Assyrian or Egyptian, in their pride ;
Yet far above, beyond the reach of sight,
Swell after swell, the heathery mountain rose.
Here, in two sources, from the living rock
The everlasting springs of Deva gush'd.
Upon a smooth and grassy plat below,
By Nature there as for an altar drest,
They join'd their sister stream, which from the earth
Well'd silently. In such a scene rude man
With pardonable error might have knelt,
Feeling a present Deity, and made
His offering to the fountain Nymph devout.

The arching rock disclosed above the springs
A cave, where hugest son of giant birth,
That e'er of old in forest of romance
'Gainst knights and ladies waged discourteous war,
Erect within the portal might have stood.
The broken stone allow'd for hand and foot
No difficult ascent, above the base
In height a tall man's stature, measured thrice.
No holier spot than Covadonga Spain
Boasts in her wide extent, though all her realms
Be with the noblest blood of martyrdom

In elder or in later days enrich'd,
And glorified with tales of heavenly aid
By many a miracle made manifest ;
Nor in the heroic annals of her fame
Doth she show forth a scene of more renown.
Then, save the hunter, drawn in keen pursuit
Beyond his wonted haunts, or shepherd's boy,
Following the pleasure of his straggling flock,
None knew the place.

Pelayo, when he saw
Those glittering sources and their sacred cave,
Took from his side the bugle silver-tipt,
And with a breath long drawn and slow expired
Sent forth that strain, which, echoing from the walls
Of Cangas, wont to tell his glad return
When from the chace he came. At the first sound
Favila started in the cave, and cried,
My father's horn ! . . A sudden flush suffused
Hermesind's cheek, and she with quicken'd eye
Look'd eager to her mother silently ;
But Gaudiosa trembled and grew pale,
Doubting her sense deceived. A second time
The bugle breathed its well-known notes abroad ;
And Hermesind around her mother's neck
Threw her white arms, and earnestly exclaim'd,
'Tis he ! . . But when a third and broader blast
Rung in the echoing archway, ne'er did wand,
With magic power endued, call up a sight
So strange, as sure in that wild solitude
It seem'd, when from the bowels of the rock
The mother and her children hasten'd forth ;
She in the sober charms and dignity
Of womanhood mature, nor verging yet

Upon decay ; in gesture like a Queen,
Such inborn and habitual majesty
Ennobled all her steps, . . or Priestess, chosen
Because within such faultless work of Heaven
Inspiring Deity might seem to make
Its habitation known. . . Favila such
In form and stature as the Sea Nymph's son,
When that wise Centaur from his cave well-pleased
Beheld the boy divine his growing strength
Against some shaggy lionet essay,
And fixing in the half-grown mane his hands,
Roll with him in fierce dalliance intertwined.
But like a creature of some higher sphere
His sister came ; she scarcely touch'd the rock,
So light was Hermesind's aerial speed.
Beauty and grace and innocence in her
In heavenly union shone. One who had held
The faith of elder Greece, would sure have thought
She was some glorious nymph of seed divine,
Oread or Dryad, of Diana's train
The youngest and the loveliest : yea she seem'd
Angel, or soul beatified, from realms
Of bliss, on errand of parental love
To earth re-sent, . . if tears and trembling limbs
With such celestial natures might consist.

Embraced by all, in turn embracing each,
The husband and the father for awhile
Forgot his country and all things beside :
Life hath few moments of such pure delight,
Such foretaste of the perfect joy of Heaven.
And when the thought recurr'd of sufferings past,
Perils which threaten'd still, and arduous toil

Yet to be undergone, remember'd griefs
Heighten'd the present happiness ; and hope
Upon the shadows of futurity
Shone like the sun upon the morning mists,
When driven before his rising rays they roll,
And melt and leave the prospect bright and clear.

When now Pelayo's eyes had drunk their fill
Of love from those dear faces, he went up
To view the hiding place. Spacious it was
As that Sicilian cavern in the hill
Wherein earth-shaking Neptune's giant son
Duly at eve was wont to fold his flock,
Ere the wise Ithacan, over that brute force
By wiles prevailing, for a life-long night
Seal'd his broad eye. The healthful air had here
Free entrance, and the cheerful light of heaven ;
But at the end, an opening in the floor
Of rock disclosed a wider vault below,
Which never sunbeam visited, nor breath
Of vivifying morning came to cheer.
No light was there but that which from above
In dim reflection fell, or found its way,
Broken and quivering, through the glassy stream,
Where through the rock it gush'd. That shadowy
light
Sufficed to show, where from their secret bed
The waters issued ; with whose rapid course,
And with whose everlasting cataracts
Such motion to the chill damp atmosphere
Was given, as if the solid walls of rock
Were shaken with the sound.

Glad to respire

The upper air, Pelayo hasten'd back
From that drear den. Look ! Hermesind exclaim'd,
Taking her father's hand, thou hast not seen
My chamber : . . See ! . . did ever ring-dove chuse
In so secure a nook her hiding-place,
Or build a warmer nest ? 'Tis fragrant too,
As warm, and not more sweet than soft ; for thyme
And myrtle with the elastic heath are laid,
And, over all, this dry and pillowy moss . . .
Smiling she spake. Pelayo kiss'd the child,
And, sighing, said within himself, I trust
In Heaven, whene'er thy May of life is come,
Sweet bird, that thou shalt have a blither bower !
Fitlier, he thought, such chamber might beseem
Some hermit of Hilarion's school austere,
Or old Antonius, he who from the hell
Of his bewilder'd phantasy saw fiends
In actual vision, a foul throng grotesque
Of all horrific shapes and forms obscene
Crowd in broad day before his open eyes.
That feeling cast a momentary shade
Of sadness o'er his soul. But deeper thoughts,
If he might have foreseen the things to come,
Would there have fill'd him ; for within that cave
His own remains were one day doom'd to find
Their final place of rest ; and in that spot,
Where that dear child with innocent delight
Had spread her mossy couch, the sepulchre
Shall in the consecrated rock be hewn,
Where with Alphonso, her beloved lord,
Laid side by side, must Hermesind partake
The everlasting marriage-bed, when he,

Leaving a name perdurable on earth,
Hath changed his earthly for a heavenly crown.
Dear child, upon that fated spot she stood,
In all the beauty of her opening youth,
In health's rich bloom, in virgin innocence,
While her eyes sparkled and her heart o'erflow'd
With pure and perfect joy of filial love.

Many a slow century since that day hath fill'd
Its course, and countless multitudes have trod
With pilgrim feet that consecrated cave ;
Yet not in all those ages, amid all
The untold concourse, hath one breast been swoln
With such emotions as Pelayo felt
That hour. O Gaudiosa, he exclaim'd,
And thou couldst seek for shelter here, amid
This awful solitude, in mountain caves !
Thou noble spirit ! Oh when hearts like thine
Grow on this sacred soil, would it not be
In me, thy husband, double infamy,
And tenfold guilt, if I despair'd of Spain ?
In all her visitations, favouring Heaven
Hath left her still the unconquerable mind ;
And thus being worthy of redemption, sure
Is she to be redeem'd.

Beholding her
Through tears he spake, and prest upon her lips
A kiss of deepest love. Think ever thus,
She answer'd, and that faith will give the power
In which it trusts. When to this mountain hold
These children, thy dear images, I brought,
I said within myself, where should they fly
But to the bosom of their native hills ?

I brought them here as to a sanctuary,
Where, for the temple's sake, the indwelling God
Would guard his supplicants. O my dear Lord,
Proud as I was to know that they were thine,
Was it a sin if I almost believed,
That Spain, her destiny being link'd with theirs,
Must save the precious charge?

So let us think,
The chief replied, so feel and teach and act.
Spain is our common parent : let the sons
Be to the parent true, and in her strength
And Heaven, their sure deliverance they will find.

VI.—RODERICK IN BATTLE

As Pedro would have answer'd, a loud cry
Of menacing imprecation from the troops
Arose ; for Orpas,¹ by the Moorish Chief
Sent to allay the storm his villainy
Had stirr'd, came hastening on a milk-white steed,
And at safe distance having check'd the rein,
Beckon'd for parley. 'Twas Orelío
On which he rode, Roderick's own battle-horse,
Who from his master's hand had wont to feed,
And with a glad docility obey
His voice familiar. At the sight the Goth
Started, and indignation to his soul
Brought back the thoughts and feelings of old times.
Suffer me, Count, he cried, to answer him,
And hold these back the while ! Thus having said,
He waited no reply, but as he was,
Bareheaded, in his weeds, and all unarm'd,

¹ Formerly Archbishop of Seville, now a renegado.—ED.

Advanced toward the renegade. Sir Priest,
Quoth Orpas as he came, I hold no talk
With thee ; my errand is with Gunderick
And the Captains of the host, to whom I bring
Such liberal offers and clear proof . . .

The Goth,

Breaking with scornful voice his speech, exclaim'd,
What, could no steed but Roderick's serve thy turn ?
I should have thought some sleek and sober mule
Long train'd in shackles to procession pace,
More suited to my lord of Seville's use
Than this good war-horse, . . he who never bore
A villain, until Orpas cross'd his back ! . . .
Wretch ! cried the astonish'd renegade, and stoopt,
Foaming with anger, from the saddle-bow
To reach his weapon. Ere the hasty hand
Trembling in passion could perform its will,
Roderick had seized the reins. How now, he cried,
Orelia ! old companion, . . my good horse, . .
Off with this recreant burthen ! . . . And with that
He raised his hand, and rear'd and back'd the steed,
To that remember'd voice and arm of power
Obedient. Down the helpless traitor fell
Violently thrown, and Roderick over him
Thrice led with just and unrelenting hand
The trampling hoofs. Go join Witiza¹ now,
Where he lies howling, the avenger cried,
And tell him Roderick sent thee !

At that sight,

Count Julian's soldiers and the Asturian host
Set up a shout, a joyful shout, which rung

¹ King of the Wisi-Goths ; dethroned and blinded by Roderick.—ED.

Wide through the welkin. Their exulting cry
With louder acclamation was renew'd,
When from the expiring miscreant's neck they saw
That Roderick took the shield, and round his own
Hung it, and vaulted in the seat. My horse !
My noble horse ! he cried, with flattering hand
Patting his high-arch'd neck ! the renegade,
I thank him for't, hath kept thee daintily !
Orelío, thou art in thy beauty still,
Thy pride and strength ! Orelío, my good horse,
Once more thou bearest to the field thy Lord,
He who so oft hath fed and cherish'd thee,
He for whose sake, wherever thou wert seen,
Thou wert by all men honour'd. Once again
Thou hast thy proper master ! Do thy part
As thou wert wont ; and bear him gloriously,
My beautiful Orelío, . . to the last . . .
The happiest of his fields ! . . . Then he drew forth
The scymitar, and waving it aloft,
Rode toward the troops ; its unaccustom'd shape
Disliked him ; Renegade in all things ! cried
The Goth, and cast it from him ; to the Chiefs
Then said, If I have done ye service here,
Help me, I pray you, to a Spanish sword !
The trustiest blade that e'er in Bilbilis
Was dipt, would not to-day be misbestowed
On this right hand ! . . Go some one, Gunderick
cried,
And bring Count Julian's sword. Whoe'er thou art,
The worth which thou hast shown avenging him
Entitles thee to wear it. But thou goest
For battle unequipp'd ; . . haste there and strip
Yon villain of his armour !

Late he spake,
So fast the Moors came on. It matters not,
Replied the Goth ; there's many a mountaineer,
Who in no better armour cased this day
Than his wonted leathern gipion, will be found
In the hottest battle, yet bring off untouch'd
The unguarded life he ventures . . . Taking then
Count Julian's sword, he fitted round his wrist
The chain, and eyeing the elaborate steel
With stern regard of joy, The African
Under unhappy stars was born, he cried,
Who tastes thy edge ! . . Make ready for the charge !
They come . . they come ! . . On, brethren, to the
field ! . .

The word is Vengeance !

Vengeance was the word ;
From man to man, and rank to rank it pass'd,
By every heart enforced, by every voice
Sent forth in loud defiance of the foe.
The enemy in shriller sounds return'd
Their Akbar and the Prophet's trusted name.
The horsemen lower'd their spears, the infantry
Deliberately with slow and steady step
Advanced ; the bowstrings twang'd, and arrows hiss'd,
And javelins hurtled by. Anon the hosts
Met in the shock of battle, horse and man
Conflicting ; shield struck shield, and sword and mace
And curtle-axe on helm and buckler rung ;
Armour was riven, and wounds were interchanged,
And many a spirit from its mortal hold
Hurried to bliss or bale. Well did the Chiefs
Of Julian's army in that hour support
Their old esteem ; and well Count Pedro there

Enhanced his former praise ; and by his side,
Rejoicing like a bridegroom in the strife,
Alphonso through the host of infidels
Bore on his bloody lance dismay and death.
But there was worst confusion and uproar,
There widest slaughter and dismay, where, proud
Of his recover'd Lord, Orelio plunged
Through thickest ranks, trampling beneath his feet
The living and the dead. Where'er he turns
The Moors divide and fly. What man is this,
Appall'd they say, who to the front of war
Bareheaded offers thus his naked life ?
Replete with power he is, and terrible,
Like some destroying Angel ! Sure his lips
Have drank of Kaf's dark fountain, and he comes
Strong in his immortality ! Fly ! fly !
They said, this is no human foe ! . . Nor less
Of wonder fill'd the Spaniards when they saw
How flight and terror went before his way,
And slaughter in his path. Behold, cries one,
With what command and knightly ease he sits
The intrepid steed, and deals from side to side
His dreadful blows ! Not Roderick in his power
Bestrode with such command and majesty
That noble war-horse. His loose robe this day
Is death's black banner, shaking from its folds
Dismay and ruin. Of no mortal mould
Is he who in that garb of peace affronts
Whole hosts, and sees them scatter where he
turns !
Auspicious Heaven beholds us, and some Saint
Revisits earth !

By this the blood
Which Deva down her fatal channel pour'd,
Purpling Pionia's course, had reach'd and stain'd
The wider stream of Sella. Soon far off
The frequent glance of spears and gleam of arms
Were seen, which sparkled to the westering orb,
Where down the vale impatient to complete
The glorious work so well that day begun,
Pelayo led his troops. On foot they came,
Chieftains and men alike ; the Oaken Cross
Triumphant borne on high, precedes their march,
And broad and bright the argent banner shone.
Roderick, who dealing death from side to side,
Had through the Moorish army now made way,
Beheld it flash, and judging well what aid
Approach'd, with sudden impulse that way rode,
To tell of what had pass'd, . . lest in the strife
They should engage with Julian's men, and mar
The mighty consummation. One ran on
To meet him fleet of foot, and having given
His tale to this swift messenger, the Goth
Halted awhile to let Orelío breathe.
Siverian, quoth Pelayo, if mine eyes
Deceive me not, yon horse, whose reeking sides
Are red with slaughter, is the same on whom
The apostate Orpas in his vauntery
Wont to parade the streets of Cordoba.
But thou shouldst know him best ; regard him well :
Is't not Orelío ?

Either it is he,
The old man replied, or one so like to him,
Whom all thought matchless, that similitude
Would be the greater wonder. But behold,

What man is he who in that disarray
Doth with such power and majesty bestride
The noble steed, as if he felt himself
In his own proper seat? Look how he leans
To cherish him; and how the gallant horse
Curves up his stately neck, and bends his head,
As if again to court that gentle touch,
And answer to the voice which praises him.
Can it be Maccabee?¹ rejoin'd the King,
Or are the secret wishes of my soul
Indeed fulfill'd, and hath the grave given up
Its dead? . . . So saying, on the old man he turn'd
Eyes full of wide astonishment, which told
The incipient thought that for incredible
He spake no farther. But enough had pass'd,
For old Siverian started at the words
Like one who sees a spectre, and exclaim'd,
Blind that I was to know him not till now!
My Master, O my Master!

He meantime

With easy pace moved on to meet their march.
King, to Pelayo he began, this day
By means scarce less than miracle, thy throne
Is stablish'd, and the wrongs of Spain revenged.
Orpas the accursed, upon yonder field
Lies ready for the ravens. By the Moors
Treacherously slain, Count Julian will be found
Before Saint Peter's altar; unto him
Grace was vouchsafed; and by that holy power
Which at Visonia from the Primate's hand
Of his own proper act to me was given,

¹ The name assumed by Roderick after his period of penance.—ED.

Unworthy as I am, . . yet sure I think
Not without mystery as the event hath shown, . .
Did I accept Count Julian's penitence,
And reconcile the dying man to Heaven.
Beside him hath his daughter fallen asleep ;
Deal honourably with his remains, and let
One grave with Christian rites receive them both.
Is it not written that as the Tree falls
So it shall lie ?

In this and all things else,
Pelayo answer'd, looking wistfully
Upon the Goth, thy pleasure shall be done.
Then Roderick saw that he was known, and
turn'd

His head away in silence. But the old man
Laid hold upon his bridle, and look'd up
In his master's face, weeping and silently.
Thereat the Goth with fervent pressure took
His hand, and bending down toward him, said,
My good Siverian, go not thou this day
To war ! I charge thee keep thyself from harm !
Thou art past the age for battles, and with whom
Hereafter should thy mistress talk of me
If thou wert gone ? . . Thou seest I am unarm'd ;
Thus disarray'd as thou beholdest me,
Clean through yon miscreant army have I cut
My way unhurt ; but being once by Heaven
Preserved, I would not perish with the guilt
Of having wilfully provoked my death.
Give me thy helmet and thy cuirass ! . . nay, . .
Thou wert not wont to let me ask in vain,
Nor to gainsay me when my will was known !
To thee methinks I should be still the King.

Thus saying, they withdrew a little way
Within the trees. Roderick alighted there,
And in the old man's armour dight himself.
Dost thou not marvel by what wondrous chance,
Said he, Orelia to his master's hand
Hath been restored ? I found the renegade
Of Seville on his back, and hurl'd him down
Headlong to the earth. The noble animal
Rejoicingly obey'd my hand to shake
His recreant burthen off, and trample out
The life which once I spared in evil hour.
Now let me meet Witiza's viperous sons
In yonder field, and then I may go rest
In peace, . . my work is done !

And nobly done !
Exclaim'd the old man. Oh ! thou art greater now
Than in that glorious hour of victory
When grovelling in the dust Witiza lay,
The prisoner of thy hand ! . . Roderick replied,
O good Siverian, happier victory
Thy son hath now achieved ! . . the victory
Over the world, his sins, and his despair.
If on the field my body should be found,
See it, I charge thee, laid in Julian's grave,
And let no idle ear be told for whom
Thou mournest. Thou wilt use Orelia
As doth beseem the steed which hath so oft
Carried a King to battle ; . . he hath done
Good service for his rightful Lord to-day,
And better yet must do. Siverian, now
Farewell ! I think we shall not meet again
Till it be in that world where never change
Is known, and they who love shall part no more.

Commend me to my mother's prayers, and say
That never man enjoy'd a heavenlier peace
Than Roderick at this hour. O faithful friend,
How dear thou art to me these tears may tell !

With that he fell upon the old man's neck ;
Then vaulted in the saddle, gave the reins,
And soon rejoin'd the host. On, comrades, on !
Victory and Vengeance ! he exclaim'd, and took
The lead on that good charger, he alone
Horsed for the onset. They with one consent
Gave all their voices to the inspiring cry,
Victory and Vengeance ! and the hills and rocks
Caught the prophetic shout and roll'd it round.
Count Pedro's people heard amid the heat
Of battle, and return'd the glad acclaim.
The astonish'd Musselmen, on all sides charged,
Hear that tremendous cry ; yet manfully
They stood, and every where with gallant front
Opposed in fair array the shock of war.
Desperately they fought, like men expert in arms,
And knowing that no safety could be found,
Save from their own right hands. No former day
Of all his long career had seen their chief
Approved so well ; nor had Witiza's sons
Ever before this hour achieved in fight
Such feats of resolute valour. Sisibert¹
Beheld Pelayo in the field afoot,
And twice essay'd beneath his horse's feet
To thrust him down. Twice did the Prince evade
The shock, and twice upon his shield received
The fratricidal sword. Tempt me no more,

¹ Son of Witiza and of Pelayo's mother. — ED.

Son of Witiza, cried the indignant chief,
Lest I forget what mother gave thee birth !
Go meet thy death from any hand but mine !
He said, and turn'd aside. Fitliest from me !
Exclaim'd a dreadful voice, as through the throng
Orelia forced his way ; fitliest from me
Receive the rightful death too long withheld !
'Tis Roderick strikes the blow ! And as he spake,
Upon the traitor's shoulder fierce he drove
The weapon, well-bestow'd. He in the seat
Totter'd and fell. The Avenger hasten'd on
In search of Ebba ;¹ and in the heat of fight
Rejoicing and forgetful of all else,
Set up his cry as he was wont in youth,
Roderick the Goth ! . . . his war-cry known so well.
Pelayo eagerly took up the word,
And shouted out his kinsman's name beloved,
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance ! Odoar gave it forth ;
Urban repeated it, and through his ranks
Count Pedro sent the cry. Not from the field
Of his great victory, when Witiza fell,
With louder acclamations had that name
Been borne abroad upon the winds of heaven.
The unreflecting throng, who yesterday,
If it had pass'd their lips, would with a curse
Have clogg'd it, echoed it as if it came
From some celestial voice in the air, reveal'd
To be the certain pledge of all their hopes.
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance ! O'er the field it spread,
All hearts and tongues uniting in the cry ;

¹ Brother of Sisibert. — Ed.

Mountains and rocks and vales re-echoed round ;
And he, rejoicing in his strength, rode on,
Laying on the Moors with that good sword, and smote,
And overthrew, and scatter'd, and destroy'd,
And trampled down ; and still at every blow
Exultingly he sent the war-cry forth,
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance !

Thus he made his way,
Smiting and slaying through the astonish'd ranks,
Till he beheld, where on a fiery barb,
Ebba, performing well a soldier's part,
Dealt to the right and left his deadly blows.
With mutual rage they met. The renegade
Displays a scymitar, the splendid gift
Of Walid from Damascus sent ; its hilt
Emboss'd with gems, its blade of perfect steel,
Which, like a mirror sparkling to the sun
With dazzling splendour, flash'd. The Goth objects
His shield, and on its rim received the edge
Driven from its aim aside, and of its force
Diminish'd. Many a frustrate stroke was dealt
On either part, and many a foin and thrust
Aim'd and rebated ; many a deadly blow,
Straight, or reverse, delivered and repell'd.
Roderick at length with better speed hath reach'd
The apostate's turban, and through all its folds
The true Cantabrian weapon making way
Attain'd his forehead. Wretch ! the Avenger cried,
It comes from Roderick's hand ! Roderick the Goth,
Who spared, who trusted thee, and was betray'd !
Go tell thy father now how thou hast sped
With all thy treasons ! Saying thus he seized

The miserable, who, blinded now with blood,
Reel'd in the saddle ; and with sidelong step
Backing Orelia, drew him to the ground.
He shrieking, as beneath the horse's feet
He fell, forgot his late-learned creed, and called
On Mary's name. The dreadful Goth pass'd on,
Still plunging through the thickest war, and still
Scattering, where'er he turn'd, the affrighted ranks.

O who could tell what deeds were wrought that day ;
Or who endure to hear the tale of rage,
Hatred, and madness, and despair, and fear,
Horror, and wounds, and agony, and death,
The cries, the blasphemies, the shrieks, and groans,
And prayers, which mingled with the din of arms
In one wild uproar of terrific sounds ;
While over all predominant was heard,
Reiterate from the conquerors o'er the field,
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance ! . . . Woe for Africa !
Woe for the circumcised ! Woe for the faith
Of the lying Ishmaelite that hour ! The Chiefs
Have fallen ; the Moors, confused and captainless,
And panic-stricken, vainly seek to escape
The inevitable fate. Turn where they will,
Strong in his cause, rejoicing in success,
Insatiate at the banquet of revenge,
The enemy is there ; look where they will,
Death hath environed their devoted ranks :
Fly where they will, the Avenger and the sword
Await them, . . wretches ! whom the righteous arm
Hath overtaken ! . . . Join'd in bonds of faith
Accurs'd, the most flagitious of mankind

From all parts met are here ; the apostate Greek,
The vicious Syrian, and the sullen Copt,
The Persian cruel and corrupt of soul,
The Arabian robber, and the prowling sons
Of Africa, who from their thirsty sands
Pray that the locusts on the peopled plain
May settle and prepare their way. Conjoined
Beneath an impious faith, which sanctifies
To them all deeds of wickedness and blood, . .
Yea, and halloos them on, . . here are they met
To be conjoin'd in punishment this hour.
For plunder, violation, massacre,
All hideous, all unutterable things,
The righteous, the immitigable sword
Exacts due vengeance now ! the cry of blood
Is heard : the measure of their crimes is full ;
Such mercy as the Moor at Auria gave,
Such mercy hath he found this dreadful hour !

The evening darken'd, but the avenging sword
Turn'd not away its edge till night had closed
Upon the field of blood. The Chieftains then
Blew the recall, and from their perfect work
Return'd rejoicing, all but he for whom
All look'd with most expectance. He full sure
Had thought upon that field to find his end
Desired, and with Florinda in the grave
Rest, in indissoluble union join'd.
But still where through the press of war he went
Half-arm'd, and like a lover seeking death,
The arrows pass'd him by to right and left,
The spear-point pierced him not, the scymitar
Glanced from his helmet ; he, when he beheld

The rout complete, saw that the shield of Heaven
Had been extended over him once more,
And bowed before its will. Upon the banks
Of Sella was Orelia found, his legs
And flanks incarnadined, his poitral smeared
With froth and foam and gore, his silver mane
Sprinkled with blood, which hung on every hair,
Aspersed like dew-drops ; trembling there he stood
From the toil of battle, and at times sent forth
His tremulous voice far echoing loud and shrill,
A frequent anxious cry, with which he seem'd
To call the master whom he loved so well,
And who had thus again forsaken him.
Siverian's helm and cuirass on the grass
Lay near ; and Julian's sword, its hilt and chain
Clotted with blood ; but where was he whose hand
Had wielded it so well that glorious day ? . . .

Days, months, and years, and generations pass'd,
And centuries held their course, before, far off
Within a hermitage near Viseu's walls
A humble tomb was found, which bore inscribed
In ancient characters King Roderick's name.

From "Madoc in Wales"

MADOC'S VOYAGE TO THE NEW WORLD

NOT with a heart unmoved I left thy shores,
Dear native isle ! oh . . . not without a pang,
As thy fair uplands lessen'd on the view,
Cast back the long involuntary look !
That morning cheer'd our outset ; gentle airs
Curl'd the blue deep, and bright the summer sun
Play'd o'er the summer ocean, when our barks
Began their way.

And they were gallant barks,
As ever through the raging billows rode ;
And many a tempest's buffeting they bore.
Their sails all swelling with the eastern breeze,
Their tighten'd cordage clattering to the mast,
Steady they rode the main : the gale aloft
Sung in the shrouds, the sparkling waters hiss'd
Before, and froth'd and whiten'd far behind.
Day after day, with one auspicious wind,
Right to the setting sun we held our course.
My hope had kindled every heart ; they blest
The unvarying breeze, whose unabating strength

Still sped us onward ; and they said that Heaven
Favour'd the bold emprise.

How many a time,
Mounting the mast-tower-top, with eager ken
They gazed, and fancied in the distant sky
Their promised shore, beneath the evening cloud,
Or seen, low lying, through the haze of morn.
I too with eyes as anxious watch'd the waves,
Though patient, and prepared for long delay ;
For not on wild adventure had I rush'd
With giddy speed, in some delirious fit
Of fancy ; but in many a tranquil hour
Weigh'd well the attempt, till hope matured to
faith.

Day after day, day after day the same, . .
A weary waste of waters ! still the breeze
Hung heavy in our sails, and we held on
One even course : a second week was gone,
And now another past, and still the same,
Waves beyond waves, the interminable sea !
What marvel, if at length the mariners
Grew sick with long expectance ? I beheld
Dark looks of growing restlessness, I heard
Distrust's low murmurings ; nor avail'd it long
To see and not perceive. Shame had awhile
Represt their fear, till like a smother'd fire
It burst, and spread with quick contagion round,
And strengthen'd as it spread. They spake in tones
Which might not be mistaken ; . . They had done
What men dared do, ventured where never keel
Had cut the deep before : still all was sea,
The same unbounded ocean ! . . to proceed
Were tempting heaven.

I heard with feign'd surprise,
And, pointing then to where our fellow bark,
Gay with her fluttering streamers and full sails,
Rode, as in triumph, o'er the element,
I ask'd them what their comrades there would deem
Of those so bold ashore, who, when a day,
Perchance an hour might crown their glorious toil,
Shrunk then, and coward-like return'd to meet
Mockery and shame? True, they had ventured on
In seas unknown, beyond where ever man
Had plough'd the billows yet : more reason so
Why they should now, like him whose happy speed
Well nigh hath run the race, with higher hope
Press onward to the prize. But late they said,
Marking the favour of the steady gale,
That Heaven was with us ; Heaven vouchsafed us still
Fair seas and favouring skies : nor need we pray
For other aid, the rest was in ourselves ;
Nature had given it, when she gave to man
Courage and constancy.

They answer'd not,
Awhile obedient ; but I saw with dread
The silent sullenness of cold assent.
Then, with what fearful eagerness I gazed
At earliest daybreak, o'er the distant deep !
How sick at heart with hope, when evening closed,
Gazed through the gathering shadows ! . . . but I saw
The sun still sink below the endless waves,
And still at morn, beneath the farthest sky,
Unbounded ocean heaved. Day after day
Before the steady gale we drove along, . .
Day after day ! The fourth week now had pass'd ;
Still all around was sea, . . the eternal sea !

So long that we had voyaged on so fast,
And still at morning where we were at night,
And where we were at morn, at nightfall still,
The centre of that drear circumference,
Progressive, yet no change ! . . almost it seem'd
That we had pass'd the mortal bounds of space,
And speed was toiling in infinity.
My days were days of fear, my hours of rest
Were like a tyrant's slumber. Sullen looks,
Eyes turn'd on me, and whispers meant to meet
My ear, and loud despondency, and talk
Of home, now never to be seen again, . .
I suffer'd these, dissembling as I could,
Till that avail'd no longer. Resolute
The men came round me : They had shown
enough
Of courage now, enough of constancy ;
Still to pursue the desperate enterprize
Were impious madness ! they had deem'd, indeed,
That Heaven in favour gave the unchanging gale ; . .
More reason now to think offended God,
When man's presumptuous folly strove to pass
The fated limits of the world, had sent
His winds, to waft us to the death we sought.
Their lives were dear, they bade me know, and they
Many, and I, the obstinate, but one.
With that, attending no reply, they hail'd
Our fellow bark, and told their fix'd resolve.
A shout of joy approved. Thus, desperate now,
I sought my solitary cabin : there
Confused with vague tumultuous feelings lay,
And to remembrance and reflection lost,
Knew only I was wretched.

Thus entranced
Cadwallon found me; shame, and grief, and pride,
And baffled hope, and fruitless anger swell'd
Within me. All is over! I exclaim'd;
Yet not in me, my friend, hath time produced
These tardy doubts and shameful fickleness;
I have not fail'd, Cadwallon! Nay, he said,
The coward fears which persecuted me
Have shown what thou hast suffer'd. We have yet
One hope . . . I pray'd them to proceed a day, . .
But one day more; . . this little have I gain'd,
And here will wait the issue; in yon bark
I am not needed, . . they are masters there.

One only day! . . The gale blew strong, the bark
Sped through the waters; but the silent hours,
Who make no pause, went by; and center'd still,
We saw the dreary vacancy of heaven
Close round our narrow view, when that brief term,
The last poor respite of our hopes expired.
They shorten'd sail, and call'd with coward prayer
For homeward winds. Why, what poor slaves are we,
In bitterness I cried; the sport of chance;
Left to the mercy of the Elements,
Or the more wayward will of such as these,
Blind tools and victims of their destiny!
Yea, Madoc! he replied, the Elements
Master indeed the feeble powers of man!
Not to the shores of Cambria will thy ships
Win back their shameful way! . . or HE, whose will
Unchains the winds, hath bade them minister
To aid us, when all human hope was gone,

Or we shall soon eternally repose
From life's long voyage.

As he spake, I saw
The clouds hang thick and heavy o'er the deep,
And heavily, upon the long slow swell,
The vessel labour'd on the labouring sea.
The reef-points rattled on the shivering sail ;
At fits the sudden gust howl'd ominous,
Anon with unremitting fury raged ;
High roll'd the mighty billows, and the blast
Swept from their sheeted sides the showery foam.
Vain now were all the seamen's homeward hopes,
Vain all their skill ! . . we drove before the storm.

'Tis pleasant, by the cheerful hearth, to hear
Of tempests and the dangers of the deep,
And pause at times, and feel that we are safe ;
Then listen to the perilous tale again,
And with an eager and suspended soul,
Woo terror to delight us. . . . But to hear
The roaring of the raging elements, . .
To know all human skill, all human strength,
Avail not, . . to look round, and only see
The mountain wave incumbent with its weight
Of bursting waters o'er the reeling bark, . . .
O God, this is indeed a dreadful thing !
And he who hath endured the horror once
Of such an hour, doth never hear the storm
Howl round his home, but he remembers it,
And thinks upon the suffering mariner.

Onward we drove : with unabating force
The tempest raged ; night added to the storm

New horrors, and the morn arose o'erspread
With heavier clouds. The weary mariners
Call'd on Saint Cyric's aid ; and I too placed
My hope on Heaven, relaxing not the while
Our human efforts. Ye who dwell at home,
Ye do not know the terrors of the main !
When the winds blow, ye walk along the shore,
And as the curling billows leap and toss,
Fable that Ocean's mermaid Shepherdess
Drives her white flocks afield, and warns in time
The wary fisherman. Gwenhidwy warn'd
When we had no retreat ! My secret heart
Almost had fail'd me. . . Were the Elements
Confounded in perpetual conflict here,
Sea, Air, and Heaven ? Or were we perishing
Where at their source the Floods, for ever thus,
Beneath the nearer influence of the moon
Labour'd in these mad workings ? Did the Waters
Here on their outmost circle meet the void,
The verge and brink of Chaos ? Or this Earth, . .
Was it indeed a living thing, . . its breath
The ebb and flow of Ocean ? and had we
Reach'd the storm rampart of its Sanctuary,
The insuperable boundary, raised to guard
Its mysteries from the eye of man profane ?

Three dreadful nights and days we drove along ;
The fourth the welcome rain came rattling down,
The wind had fallen, and through the broken cloud
Appeared the bright dilating blue of heaven.
Embolden'd now, I call'd the mariners : . .
Vain were it should we bend a homeward course,
Driven by the storm so far ; they saw our barks,

For service of that long and perilous way
Disabled, and our food belike to fail.
Silent they heard, reluctant in assent ;
Anon, they shouted joyfully, . . I look'd
And saw a bird slow sailing overhead,
His long white pinions by the sunbeam edged
As though with burnish'd silver ; . . never yet
Heard I so sweet a music as his cry !

Yet three days more, and hope more eager now,
Sure of the signs of land, . . weed-shoals, and birds
Who flock'd the main, and gentle airs which breathed,
Or seem'd to breathe, fresh fragrance from the
shore,

On the last evening, a long shadowy line
Skirted the sea ; . . how fast the night closed in !
I stood upon the deck, and watch'd till dawn.
But who can tell what feelings fill'd my heart,
When like a cloud the distant land arose
Grey from the ocean, . . when we left the ship,
And cleft, with rapid oars, the shallow wave,
And stood triumphant on another world !

From "Madoc in Aztlan"

THE ATTACK UPON THE WOMEN ¹

SILENT and solitary is thy vale,
Caermadoc, and how melancholy now
That solitude and silence ! . . . Broad noon-day,
And not a sound of human life is there !
The fisher's net, abandon'd in his haste,
Sways idly in the waters ; in the tree,
Where its last stroke had pierced, the hatchet hangs :
The birds, beside the mattock and the spade,
Hunt in the new-turn'd mould, and fearlessly
Fly through the cage-work of the imperfect wall ;
Or through the vacant dwelling's open door,
Pass and repass secure.

In Madoc's house,
And on his bed of reeds, Goervyl lies,

¹ Madoc is a prisoner in the hands of the hostile Aztecas, when Prince Amalahta, son of Queen Erillyab (a friend to the British, and now a Christian), turns traitor, and attacks the women of the settlement named Caermadoc. Goervyl is sister of Madoc ; Mervyn, supposed a page, is the maiden Senena, who has accompanied Madoc in order to be near her lover, Caradoc ; Malinal is a young Azteca loyal to the British leader. —ED.

Her face toward the ground. She neither weeps,
Nor sighs, nor groans ; too strong her agony
For outward sign of anguish, and for prayer
Too hopeless was the ill ; and though, at times,
The pious exclamation pass'd her lips,
Thy will be done ! yet was that utterance
Rather the breathing of a broken heart,
Than of a soul resign'd. Mervyn beside,
Hangs over his dear mistress silently,
Having no hope or comfort to bestow,
Nor aught but sobs and unavailing tears.
The women of Caermadoc, like a flock
Collected in their panic, stand around
The house of their lost leader ; and they too
Are mute in their despair. Llaian alone
Is absent ; wildly hath she wander'd forth
To seek her child, and such the general woe,
That none hath mark'd her absence. Yet have they,
Though unprotected thus, no selfish fear ;
The sudden evil had destroyed all thought,
All sense of present danger to themselves,
All foresight.

Yet new terrors ! Malinal,
Panting with speed, bursts in, and takes the arms
Of Madoc down. Goervyl, at that sound,
Started in sudden hope ; but when she saw
The Azteca, she uttered a faint scream
Of wrongful fear, remembering not the proofs
Of his tried truth, nor recognizing aught
In those known features, save their hostile hue.
But he, by worsser fear abating soon
Her vain alarm, exclaim'd, I saw a band
Of Hoamen coming up the straits, for ill,

Be sure, for Amalahta leads them on.
Buckle this harness on, that, being arm'd,
I may defend the entrance.

Scarce had she
Fasten'd the breast-plate with her trembling hands,
When, flying from the sight of men in arms,
The women crowded in. Hastily he seized
The shield and spear, and on the threshold took
His stand ; but, waken'd now to provident thought,
Goervyl, following, helm'd him. There was now
No time to gird the bauldric on ; she held
Her brother's sword, and bade him look to her
For prompt supply of weapons ; in herself
Being resolved not idly to abide,
Nor unprepared of hand or heart to meet
The issue of the danger, nor to die
Reluctant now.

Rightly had they divined
The Hoaman's felon purpose. When he heard
The fate of Madoc, from his mother's eye
He mask'd his secret joy, and took his arms,
And to the rescue, with the foremost band,
Set forth. But soon, upon the way, he told,
The associates of his crime, that now their hour
Of triumph was arrived ; Caermadoc, left
Defenceless, would become, with all its wealth,
The spoiler's easy prey, raiment and arms
And iron ; skins of that sweet beverage,
Which to a sense of its own life could stir
The joyful blood ; the women above all,
Whom to the forest they might bear away,
To be their slaves, if so their pleasure was ;
Or, yielding them to Aztlan, for such prize

Receive a royal guerdon. Twelve there were,
Long leagued with him in guilt, who turn'd aside :
And they have reach'd Caermadoc now, and now
Rush onward, where they see the women fly ;
When, on the threshold, clad in Cimbric arms,
And with long lance protended, Malinal
Rebuffs them from the entrance. At that sight
Suddenly quail'd, they stood, as midnight thieves
Who find the master waking ; but ere long,
Gathering a boastful courage, as they saw
No other guard, press'd forward, and essay'd
To turn his spear aside. Its steady point,
True to the impelling strength, held on, and thrust
The foremost through the breast, and breath and
blood

Followed the re-drawn shaft. Nor seem'd the strife
Unequal now, though with their numbers, they
Beleaguer'd in half-ring the door, where he,
The sole defender, stood. From side to side,
So well and swiftly did he veer the lance,
That every enemy beheld its point
Aim'd at himself direct. But chief on one
Had Malinal his deadly purpose fix'd.
On Amalahta ; by his death to quell
The present danger, and cut off the root
Of many an evil, certain else to spring
From that accursed stock. On him his eye
Turn'd with more eager wilfulness, and dwelt
With keener ken ; and now, with sudden step
Bending his body on, at him he drives
The meditated blow : but that ill Prince,
As chiefly sought, so chiefly fearing, swerved
Timely aside : and ere the Azteca

Recovered from the frustrate aim, the spear
Was seized, and from his hold, by stress and weight
Of numbers wrench'd. He, facing still the foe,
And holding at arm's length the targe, put back
His hand, and called Goervyl, and from her
Received the sword : . . in time, for the enemy
Prest on so near, that having now no scope
To raise his arm, he drove the blade straight on.
It entered at the mouth of one who stood
With face aslant, and glanced along the teeth
Through to the ear, then, slivering downward, left
The cheek-flap dangling. He, in that same point
Of time, as if a single impulse gave
Birth to the double action, dash'd his shield
Against another's head, with so fierce swing
And sway of strength, that this third enemy
Fell at his feet. Astounded by such proof
Of prowess, and by unexpected loss
Dismay'd, the foe gave back, beyond the reach
Of his strong arm ; and there awhile they stood,
Beholding him at bay, and counselling
How best to work their vengeance upon him,
Their sole opponent. Soon did they behold
The vantage, overlook'd by hasty hope,
How vulnerable he stood, his arms and thighs
Bare for their butt. At once they bent their bows ;
At once ten arrows fled ; seven, shot in vain,
Rung on his shield ; but, with unhappier mark,
Two shafts hung quivering in his leg ; a third
Below the shoulder pierced. Then Malinal
Groan'd, not for anguish of his wounds, but grief
And agony of spirit ; yet resolved
To his last gasp to guard that precious post,

Nor longer able to endure afoot,
He, falling on his knees, received unharm'd
Upon the shield, now ample for defence,
Their second shower, and still defied the foe.
But they, now sure of conquest, hasten'd on
To thrust him down, and he too felt his strength
Ebbing away. Goervyl, in that hour
Of horror and despair, collected still,
Caught him, and by the shoulders drew him in ;
And, calling on her comrades, with their help
Shut to the door in time, and with their weight
Secured it, not their strength ; for she alone,
Found worthy of her noble ancestry,
In this emergence felt her faculties
All present, and heroic strength of heart,
To cope with danger and contempt of death.
Shame on ye, British women ! shame ! exclaim'd
The daughter of King Owen, as she saw
The trembling hands and bloodless countenance
Pale as sepulchral marble ; silent some ;
Others with womanish cries lamenting now
That ever, in unhappy hour, they left
Their native land ; . . a pardonable fear ;
For hark, the war-whoop ! sound, whereto the howl
Of tigers or hyenas, heard at night
By captive from barbarian foes escaped,
And wandering in the pathless wilderness,
Were music. Shame on ye ! Goervyl cried ;
Think what your fathers were, your husbands what,
And what your sons should be ! These savages
Seek not to wreak on ye immediate death ;
So are ye safe, if safety such as this
Be worth a thought ; and in the interval

We yet may gain, by keeping to the last
This entrance, easily to be maintain'd
By us, though women, against foes so few, . .
Who knows what succour chance, or timely thought
Of our own friends may send, or Providence,
Who slumbereth not? . . While thus she spake, a
hand

In at the window came, of one who sought
That way to win the entrance. She drew out
The arrow through the arm of Malinal,
With gentle care, . . the readiest weapon that, . .
And held it short above the bony barb,
And, adding deeds to words, with all her might
She stabbed it through the hand. The sudden pain
Provoked a cry, and back the savage fell,
Loosening his hold, and maim'd for further war.
Nay, leave that entrance open! she exclaim'd
To one who would have closed it, . . who comes next
Shall not go thence so cheaply! . . for she now
Had taken up a spear to guard that way,
Easily guarded, even by female might.
O heart of proof! what now avails thy worth
And excellent courage? for the savage foe,
With mattock and with spade, for other use
Design'd, hew now upon the door, and rend
The wattled sides; and they within shrink back,
For now it splinters through, . . and lo, the way
Is open to the spoiler!

Then once more,
Collecting his last strength, did Malinal
Rise on his knees, and over him the maid
Stands with the ready spear, she guarding him
Who guarded her so well. Roused to new force

By that exampled valour, and with will
To achieve one service yet before he died, . .
If death indeed, as sure he thought, were nigh, . .
Malinal gather'd up his fainting powers ;
And reaching forward, with a blow that threw
His body on, upon the knee he smote
One Hoaman more, and brought him to the ground.
The foe fell over him ; but he, prepared,
Threw him with sudden jerk aside, and rose
Upon one hand, and with the other plunged
Between his ribs the mortal blade. Meantime
Amalahta, rushing in blind eagerness
To seize Goervyl, set at nought the power
Of female hands, and stooping as he came
Beneath her spear-point, thought with lifted arm
To turn the thrust aside. But she drew back,
And lowered at once the spear with aim so sure,
That on the front it met him, and plough'd up
The whole scalp-length. He, blinded by the blood,
Stagger'd aside, escaping by that chance
A second push, else mortal. And by this,
The women, learning courage from despair,
And by Goervyl's bold example fired,
Took heart, and rushing on with one accord,
Drove out the foe. Then took they hope ; for then
They saw but seven remain in plight for war ;
And, knowing their own number, in the pride
Of strength caught up stones, staves, or axe, or spear,
To hostile use converting whatsoe'er
The hasty hand could seize. Such fierce attack
Confused the ruffian band ; nor had they room
To aim the arrow, nor to speed the spear,
Each now beset by many. But their Prince,

Still mindful of his purport, call'd to them, . .
Secure my passage while I bear away
The White King's Sister ; having her, the law
Of peace is in our power. . . And on he went
Toward Goervyl, and, with sudden turn,
While on another foe her eye was fix'd,
Ran in upon her, and stoop'd down, and claspt
The Maid above the knees, and throwing her
Over his shoulder, to the valley straits
Set off : . . ill seconded in ill attempt ;
For now his comrades are too close beset
To aid their Chief, and Mervyn hath beheld
His lady's peril. At the sight, inspired
With force, as if indeed that manly garb
Had clothed a manly heart, the Page ran on,
And with a bill-hook striking at his ham,
Cut the back sinews. Amalahta fell ;
The Maid fell with him : and she first hath risen,
While, grovelling on the earth, he gnash'd his teeth
For agony. Yet, even in those pangs,
Remembering still revenge, he turn'd and seized
Goervyl's skirt, and pluck'd her to the ground,
And roll'd himself upon her, and essay'd
To kneel upon her breast ; but she clench'd fast
His bloody locks, and drew him down aside,
Faint now with anguish, and with loss of blood ;
And Mervyn, coming to her help again,
As once again he rose, around the neck
Seized him, with throttling grasp, and held him
down, . .
Strange strife and horrible, . . till Malinal
Crawl'd to the spot, and thrust into his groin
The mortal sword of Madoc ; he himself,

At the same moment, fainting, now no more
By his strong will upheld, the service done.
The few surviving traitors, at the sight
Of their fallen Prince and Leader, now too late
Believed that some diviner power had given
These female arms strength for their overthrow,
Themselves proved weak before them, as, of late,
Their God, by Madoc crush'd.

Away they fled

Toward the valley straits ; but in the gorge
Erillyab met their flight : and then her heart
Boding the evil, smote her, and she bade
Her people seize, and bring them on in bonds,
For judgement. She herself, with quicken'd pace,
Advanced, to know the worst ; and o'er the dead
Casting a rapid glance, she knew her son.
She knew him by his garments, by the work
Of her own hands ; for now his face, besmear'd
And black with gore, and stiffen'd in its pangs,
Bore of the life no semblance. . . God is good !
She cried, and closed her eyelids, and her lips
Shook, and her countenance changed. But in her
heart

She quell'd the natural feeling. . . Bear away
These wretches ! . . to her followers she exclaim'd ;
And root them from the earth. Then she approach'd
Goervyl, who was pale and trembling now,
Exhausted with past effort ; and she took
Gently the maiden's tremulous hand, and said,
God comfort thee, my Sister ! At that voice
Of consolation, from her dreamy state
Goervyl to a sense of all her woe
Awoke, and burst into a gush of tears.

God comfort thee, my Sister ! cried the Queen,
Even as He strengthens me. I would not raise
Deceitful hope, . . but in His hand, even yet,
The issue hangs ; and He is merciful.

Yea, daughter of Aberfraw, take thou hope !
For Madoc lives ! . . he lives to wield the sword
Of righteous vengeance, and accomplish all.

DISCOVERY OF MERVYN'S SEX

BUT Madoc linger'd not, his eager soul
Was in the war, in haste he donn'd his arms ;
And as he felt his own good sword again,
Exulting play'd his heart. . . Boy, he exclaim'd
To Mervyn, arm thyself, and follow me !
For in this battle we shall break the power
Of our blood-thirsty foe : and, in thine age,
Wouldst thou not wish, when young men crowd
 around
To hear thee chronicle their fathers' deeds,
Wouldst thou not wish to add, . . And I, too, fought
In that day's conflict ?

 Mervyn's cheek turn'd pale
A moment, then, with terror all suffused,
Grew fever-red. Nay, nay, Goervyl cried,
He is too young for battles ! . . But the Prince,
With erring judgement, in that fear-flush'd cheek
Beheld the glow of enterprising hope,
And youthful courage. I was such a boy,
'Sister ! he cried, at Counsyllt ; and that day,
In my first field, with stripling arm, smote down
Many a tall Saxon. Saidst thou not but now,

How bravely in the fight of yesterday,
He flesh'd his sword, . . . and wouldst thou keep him
here

And rob him of his glory? See his cheek!
How it hath crimson'd at the unworthy thought!
Arm! arm! and to the battle!

How her heart

Then panted! how, with late regret, and vain,
Senena wished Goervyl then had heard
The secret, trembling on her lips so oft,
So oft by shame withheld. She thought that now
She could have fallen upon her Lady's neck,
And told her all; but when she saw the Prince,
Imperious shame forbade her, and she felt
It were an easier thing to die than speak.
Avail'd not now regret or female fear!
She mail'd her delicate limbs; beneath the plate
Compress'd her bosom; on her golden locks
The helmet's overheavy load she placed;
Hung from her neck the shield; and, though the sword
Which swung beside her lightest she had chosen,
Though in her hand she held the slenderest spear,
Alike unwieldy for the maiden's grasp,
The sword and ashen lance. But as she touch'd
The murderous point, an icy shudder ran
Through every fibre of her trembling frame;
And, overcome by womanly terror then,
The damsel to Goervyl turn'd, and let
The breastplate fall, and on her bosom placed
The Lady's hand, and hid her face, and cried,
Save me! The warrior, who beheld the act,
And heard not the low voice, with angry eye
Glow'd on the seemly boy of feeble heart.

But, in Goervyl, joy had overpower'd
The wonder ; joy to find the boy she loved
Was one, to whom her heart with closer love
Might cling ; and to her brother she exclaim'd
She must not go ! We women in the war
Have done our parts.

CARADOC AND SENENA (MERVYN)

MAID of the golden locks, far other lot
May gentle Heaven assign thy happier love,
Blue-eyed Senena ! . . She, though not as yet
Had she put off her boy-habiliments,
Had told Goervyl all the history
Of her sad flight, and easy pardon gain'd
From that sweet heart, for guile which meant no ill,
And secrecy, in shame too long maintain'd.
With her dear Lady now, at this still hour
Of evening is the seeming page gone forth,
Beside Caermadoc mere. They loiter'd on,
Along the windings of its grassy shore,
In such free interchange of inward thought
As the calm hour invited ; or at times,
Willingly silent, listening to the bird
Whose one repeated melancholy note,
By oft repeating melancholy made,
Solicited the ear ; or gladlier now
Harkening that cheerful one, who knoweth all
The songs of all the winged choristers,
And in one sequence of melodious sounds
Pours all their music. But a wilder strain
At fits came o'er the water ; rising now,
Now with a dying fall, in sink and swell

More exquisitely sweet than ever art
Of man evoked from instrument of touch,
Or beat, or breath. It was the evening gale,
Which passing o'er the harp of Caradoc,
Swept all its chords at once, and blended all
Their music into one continuous flow.
The solitary Bard beside his harp
Leant underneath a tree, whose spreading boughs,
With broken shade that shifted to the breeze,
Play'd on the waving waters. Overhead
There was the leafy murmur, at his foot
The lake's perpetual ripple ; and from far,
Borne on the modulating gale, was heard
The roaring of the mountain cataract. . .
A blind man would have loved the lovely spot.

Here was Senena by her Lady led,
Trembling, but not reluctant. They drew nigh,
Their steps unheard upon the elastic moss,
Till playfully Goervyl, with quick touch,
Ran o'er the harp-strings. At the sudden sound
He rose. . . Hath then thy hand, quoth she, O Bard,
Forgot its cunning, that the wind should be
Thine harper ? . . Come ! one strain for Britain's
sake ;
And let the theme be Woman ! . . . He replied,
But if the strain offend, O Lady fair,
Blame thou the theme, not me ! . . Then to the harp
He sung, . . Three things a wise man will not trust,
The Wind, the Sunshine of an April day,
And Woman's plighted faith. I have beheld
The Weathercock upon the steeple-point
Steady from morn till eve ; and I have seen

The bees go forth upon an April morn,
Secure the sunshine will not end in showers ;
But when was Woman true ?

False Bard ! thereat,
With smile of playful anger, she exclaim'd,
False Bard ! and slanderous song ! Were such thy
thoughts

Of woman, when thy youthful lays were heard
In Heilyn's hall ? . . But at that name his heart
Leapt, and his check with sudden flush was fired ;
In Heilyn's hall, quoth he, I learn'd the song.
There was a Maid, who dwelt among the hills
Of Arvon, and to one of humbler birth
Had pledged her troth ; . . nor rashly, nor beguiled, . .
They had been playmates in their infancy,
And she in all his thoughts had borne a part,
And all his joys. The Moon and all the Stars
Witness'd their mutual vows ; and for her sake
The song was framed ; for in the face of day
She broke them. . . But her name ? Goervyl ask'd ;
Quoth he, The poet loved her still too well,
To couple it with shame.

O fate unjust
Of womankind ! she cried ; our virtues bloom,
Like violets, in shade and solitude,
While evil eyes hunt all our failings out,
For evil tongues to bruit abroad in jest,
And song of obloquy ! . . I knew a Maid,
And she too dwelt in Arvon, and she too
Loved one of lowly birth, who ill repaid
Her spotless faith ; for he to ill reports,
And tales of falsehood cunningly devised,
Lent a light ear, and to his rival left

The loathing Maid. The wedding-day arrived,
The harpers and the gleemen, far and near,
Came to the wedding-feast ; the wedding-guests
Were come, the altar drest, the bridemaids met,
The father, and the bridegroom, and the priest
Wait for the bride. But she the while did off
Her bridal robes, and clipt her golden locks,
And put on boy's attire, through wood and wild
To seek her own true love ; and over sea,
Forsaking all for him, she followed him, . .
Nor hoping nor deserving fate so fair ;
And at his side she stood, and heard him wrong
Her faith with slanderous tales ; and his dull eye,
As it had learnt his heart's forgetfulness,
Knows not the trembling one, who even now
Yearns to forgive him all !

He turn'd, he knew
The blue-eyed Maid, who fell upon his breast.



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